

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 455 980

RC 022 695

AUTHOR Stoll, Amy, Ed.
 TITLE Reclaiming Native Education: Activism, Teaching and Leadership.
 INSTITUTION Cultural Survival, Cambridge, MA.
 SPONS AGENCY Massachusetts Cultural Council, Boston.
 ISSN ISSN-0740-3291
 PUB DATE 1998-00-00
 NOTE 69p.; Theme issue. Photographs may not reproduce adequately.
 AVAILABLE FROM Cultural Survival, 96 Mount Auburn St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Tel: 617-441-5400.
 PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
 JOURNAL CIT Cultural Survival Quarterly; v22 n1 Spr 1998
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Activism; *American Indian Education; American Indians; Culturally Relevant Education; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Indigenous Populations; Language Maintenance; Maori (People); Maya (People); Mexicans; *Self Determination

ABSTRACT

The bulk of this theme issue of Cultural Survival Quarterly consists of a 41-page "focus" section on indigenous peoples' efforts to regain control of their children's education and on the role of indigenous educators as agents of change. Following an introduction by Nimachia Hernandez and Nicole Thornton, the articles in this section are: "Contexts and Challenges of Educating Tibetan Children in the Diaspora" (Nawang Phuntsog); "The Educational and Cultural Implications of Maori Language Revitalization" (Linda Tuhiwai Smith); "Our Children Can't Wait: Recapturing the Essence of Indigenous Schools in the United States" (Cornel Pewewardy); "Teaching Tribal Histories from a Native Perspective" (Lea Whitford); "Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Exploring Hawaiian Views of Knowledge" (Manu Aluli Meyer); "Indigenous Rights and Schooling in Highland Chiapas" (Margaret Freedson Gonzales, Elias Perez Perez); "Chanob Vun ta Batz'i K'op of Sna Jrz'ibajom: An Alternative Education in Our Native Languages" (Antonio de la Torre Lopez, translated by Bret Gustafson); "Who Can Make a Difference? Everybody Can! Sharing Information on Indigenous Educational Success--A Case Study from Australia" (Robert Sykes); "Maya Education and Pan Maya Ideology in the Yucatan" (Allan Burns); "Indigenous Legal Translators: Challenges of a University Program for the Maya of Guatemala" (Guillermina Herrera Pena, translated by Nicole Thornton); "What Exactly Is It That You Teach? Developing an Indigenous Education Program at the University Level" (Deirdre A. Almeida); and "Historical and Contemporary Policies of Indigenous Education in Mexico" (Salomon Nahmad, translated by Nicole Thornton). This issue also contains brief notes on educational, cultural, political, and health issues of indigenous peoples worldwide; book reviews; listings of resources and events; and updates on special projects. (SV)

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World Report on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Reclaiming Native Education

Activism,
Teaching and
Leadership

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**FOCUS:**
Reclaiming Native Education
Activism, Teaching and Leadership

Students horsing around
at the Mounds Park All-
Nations Magnet School
in St. Paul, MN.



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On the cover

Students at school in Katsel, Tibet

Photo: Courtesy of the Tibetan School Project

CULTURAL SURVIVAL

Photo: Gabriela Ramirez



Indigenous children in Mexico have suffered from assimilationist educational policies to 'Mexicanize' the Indian, but some states, like Oaxaca, have passed progressive educational laws that provide bilingual and intercultural education to all indigenous peoples.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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Inc. *Cultural Survival Quarterly* (ISSN
0740-3291) is indexed by *Alternative Press*
Index (API) and *Environmental Periodicals*
Bibliography. *Cultural Survival Quarterly* is
published four times per year for \$45 per
year by Cultural Survival, Inc., 96 Mt. Auburn
St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Periodicals
postage is paid at Boston, MA, permit no.
8-189. Postmaster, send address changes to:
Cultural Survival, 96 Mt. Auburn St.,
Cambridge, MA 02138. Printed on recy-
cled paper in the U.S.A. Please note that
the views in this magazine are those of
the authors and do not necessarily repre-
sent the views of Cultural Survival.

Designer, Jason Gross

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Corrections to CSQ 21(4):

On page 44, the last sentence of the first paragraph in
the second column should read: Currently, Tim
Ericson, an American from Modesto, California is in
the process of developing Syriac (not Islamic) fonts
for use on-line. We apologize for the mistake.

The Context of Education

by David Maybury-Lewis

The recent passionate debates concerning teaching history and representing minorities in American classrooms have made us all aware that education is not a culturally neutral process. It is not simply a matter of teachers drilling their students in the three Rs and then going on to fill their heads with progressively more advanced levels of knowledge. What is taught, the perspective from which it is taught, the language in which it is taught, and the cultural context of teaching are all important aspects of education, and this becomes abundantly clear when the teachers do not share the same cultural background as their students. This has traditionally been the case in the education of indigenous peoples who, when they received any education at all, were normally taught by aliens who considered their students inferior, thought they needed to be trained to despise their own language and way of life, and accept the language and culture of their conquerors. The articles in this issue summarize that bitter history, but they also show the difficulties of establishing different educational systems once it has been decided to do so.

The histories of indigenous educational experiences differ in their particulars but are sadly similar in their generalities. The Maya, for example, have fought for centuries to maintain their ancient culture in the face of attempts, first by the Spanish and later by the governments of Mexico and Guatemala, to eradicate it. The indigenous peoples of the U.S. and Australia had their children forcibly taken from them and thrust into schools that tried to educate them away from the languages and customs of their ancestors. The Tibetans have only recently come to the experience of being indigenous, that is to say being marginalized in their own country by conquering outsiders. Their traditional educational system has been abolished by the Chinese and it is only refugee Tibetans who can try to revive it in the diaspora. In all these instances the alien education systems sought to eliminate the cultures of the people they were educating. Indigenous education systems, by contrast, are as much concerned with cultural survival as they are with the transmission of knowledge; yet this is easier said than done.

The Tibetan refugees, for example, face an uphill struggle as they try to maintain their monastic educational system abroad, or alternatively, to develop a new and secular system. They want their educational institutions to keep Tibetan language and culture alive among their children while at the same time preparing their children to cope successfully with life outside Tibet. Even

peoples who do not face the double burden of being indigenous in and refugees from their home countries face difficult problems as they try to devise educational systems that can overcome the prejudices and injustices of the past. The Maori, for example, are now receiving considerable support from the government of New Zealand for Maori language educational programs, but they are discovering that the revitalization of Maori culture is more difficult. They face a poignant and familiar dilemma where young Maori have been taught the Maori language, but have drifted away from Maori culture, while older Maori are trying to keep Maori culture alive, even though they no longer speak the language.

The whole point of indigenous educational systems is to keep both language and culture alive, to teach people to see the world from the special vantage point that their culture provides. The cruel irony is that now, as nations are increasingly willing to permit indigenous peoples to develop their own systems of education, those systems and the cultures that give them meaning are threatened with erosion by national or even global forces. The teachers who strongly resist teaching Mayan children in their own languages are themselves Maya who feel that the children would be better off with a stronger grounding in Spanish. Meanwhile the children risk being alienated by an overly Hispanic curriculum or isolated by an overly Mayan one. But the risk of isolation is more than offset for the Maya by the exhilaration of recovering their culture, its world view, its calendar, its literature, and making them central to the education of their children. Native Americans in the U.S. are likewise experiencing the excitement of devising curricula that seek to express their holistic and synthetic thinking rather than the piecemeal and analytical approach previously imposed upon them.

The good news therefore is that indigenous peoples are taking control of their educational systems in so many parts of the world. The sad news is that this does not solve all their educational problems. Now their systems and the people educated in them have to compete for acceptance in societies that may be dubious about multiculturalism or that accept it in theory but not in practice. Still, as the nations of the world struggle towards a multicultural future, their acceptance of the cultural context of educational systems is a giant step in the right direction.

David Maybury-Lewis is Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. He is also Founder and President of Cultural Survival

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The Native American Preparatory School

by Allison Donald

In 1988, The Native American Preparatory School (NAPS) was established to enrich the education of American Indian children in seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in preparation for higher education. Located in Rowe, New Mexico on a 1600 acre campus, NAPS has evolved from a challenging five week summer school for junior high school students, to include a highly prestigious four year college prep school which admitted its first class in September, 1995.

Now in its third year, the college prep school includes a student body that represents 13 states, 33 tribal entities, and two countries—the U.S. and Canada. Compared to the 50 Navajo youths that made up the first summer school program in 1988, NAPS' expanse, both in its programs and its student body, is largely due to the philosophy on which it was founded.

NAPS is dedicated to providing a rigorous and challenging environment in which American Indian students can

maintain and strengthen both their traditional values and native identities while enriching their academic experience through a Western education. This combination enables students to meet the challenges of higher education through a unique and culturally rich experience.

At comparable college prep schools, average yearly tuition per student can range around \$20,000 a year. NAPS however, is the first privately funded school for American Indians and while need-based financial aid is available, the average student tuition is \$900 annually. Foundation grants and individual donations are also a source of financial aid. Students are admitted through an application process on the basis of academic merit and personal achievement.

One of the goals of NAPS is to redefine the Native American educational system. As founder and chair of NAPS, Richard P. Ettinger states:

"the youth who are educated at the Native American Preparatory School will be the leaders not only of their own tribes and states, but will also become

FOR MORE INFO

Contact Native American Preparatory School PO Box 160, Rowe, NM 87562, tel (505) 474-6801, fax (505) 474-6816 and Elizabeth Martin Public Relations, 411-B Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501-1938, tel (505) 989-1733, fax (505) 989-3928.



effective architects of United States policy. We help our exceptional students recognize their own abilities, and prepare them to wrestle with formidable societal challenges that face all of us. With quality education, American Indian people

will regain their rightful place in America—proud of their culture and traditions, and confident in their ability to succeed at any endeavor."

Sources:

The Native American Preparatory School:
www.gse.ucl.edu

Press Release from Elizabeth Martin Public Relations, Ltd.

The Interconnection Between Culture and Medicine

by Lara Zielin

According to panel members of Alternative Systems of Medical Practice, 70-90% of global health care systems conceptualize and interpret sickness differently than through the schema of modern medicine. Interestingly, these alternative schemas (often termed 'folk' practices or illnesses) are beginning to influence medically advanced societies—particularly the U.S.—which has previously ignored these seemingly superstitious medical methodologies.

The Texas Medical Institute has emphasized that understanding the cultural context from which a patient comes is as important as understanding the sickness itself. In Texas, overwhelming numbers of Hispanic immigrants seeking effective health care simultaneously draw from folk or traditional medical practices and beliefs. For example, *susto*, a 'fright sickness,' illustrates the relationship between the social and physical realms and is common among Mexican or Hispanic populations in Texas. According to Dr. Rodriguez, Director of



Teacher working with NAPS students.

BRIEFLY NOTED

the Center for Immigration Research at the University of Houston, "if you're frightened or shocked by something so that your body or your spirit is believed to be in disequilibrium, you're in a state of *susto*...For us, it would be comparable to anxiety or depression." Some symptoms of *susto* can include sleeplessness, apathy, crying easily, or weight loss. However, according to anthropologist Frank Lipp, *susto*'s symptoms and diag-

FOR MORE INFO

Rubel, O'Neill and Collando-Ardon, "The Folk Illness Called *Susto*" in *The Culture Bound Syndromes*. 1985.



Texas Medical Institute:
www.texmed.org

nosis cannot be "reduced to and embedded into" a singularly scientific framework without understanding the ways in which it is "culturally designed and experienced." Treating *susto* is not as simple as prescribing pills and waiting for them to take effect. Rather, treating the sickness may entail understanding how the sickness is culturally designed, experienced, and translated.

Robert Carlson, author of "Flour from a Different Sack" featured in *Texas Medicine*, indicates that modern medicine must expand its analysis of sickness and treatment to meet the needs of the burgeoning Hispanic population, for whom *susto* embodies much more than an individual with certain symptoms. When a person is affected by *susto*, "the whole community is believed to be in danger. Therefore, the treatment must address the entire community rather than just the patient." Medical anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock believe that modern medicine is often incapable of defining illness as anything more than just a physical malfunction. According to Scheper-Hughes and Lock, those who practice and partake in modern medicine often lack a precise vocabulary to deal with mind/body/society interactions. Thus, a

Cartesian mind/body dualism pervades treatment and illness is analyzed and treated apart from the social context in which it is found. The Texas Medical Institute is quickly discovering that this analysis of sickness is not always effective. Consequently, the interplay between the biological and the social is worthy of investigation, not only in cases of *susto* but also in sicknesses more commonly prevalent in dominant United States culture.

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www.texmed.org/home/news_events/texas_medicine/news/featureoct96.htm

www.nlm.nih

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Mixe of Oaxaca." *Dialectical Anthropology* 12:4. pp. 435-442.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Lock, Margaret M. 1987.

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Web Site Highlights Struggles of India's Hill Peoples

by Rajiv Rawat

The hill districts of India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, have attracted international attention from environmentalists' efforts to safeguard the Himalayan forests. As the source of the Ganges River and home to India's highest peaks and holiest shrines, deforestation in this area called Uttarakhand has led to environmental deterioration. This process has made living even more precarious, adding to the already difficult conditions of hill life. Chipko, India's first modern environmental movement, began in these hills as did other awareness campaigns. Involving thousands of mostly women villagers, these movements have fought social ills brought on by the exploitation of natural resources as a result of the nation's industrialization and development.

In recent years, agitation for separate statehood within the Indian union has mobilized the hill people as never before, as hopes for a better future

FOR MORE INFO

For more info on Uttarakhand and the Himalayas, please contact Rajiv Rawat at rawat@hsph.harvard.edu or (617) 623-4226 or check out the website at www.geocities.com/~karnavati.



have found expression in calls for self-determination and local control over government and resources. This past fall, overseas friends of these social movements established a web page highlighting the issues confronting the Himalayas and its peoples. Located at <http://www.geocities.com/~karnavati>, the site offers a wealth of information on the



Hill women foraging for fuel wood, an activity that often consumes 16 hours a day.

history, geography, and current events of the Indian Himalayas. As such, supporters hope to educate Uttarakhandis, other Indians, and world citizens alike, as the first step to raising support for the ongoing struggle of the hill people to determine their own destiny.

HIV/AIDS Funding Denied for Natives

by Seema Sharma

In the 29 years of its existence, the American Indian Community House (AICH) of New York City has developed culturally sensitive approaches to manag-

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ing, counseling, and educating Native Americans about job training and placement, health services, HIV/AIDS referral and case management, and counseling programs for alcohol and substance abuse. In addition, the AICH HIV/AIDS Project has established an Outreach Program to assist Native Americans living with HIV/AIDS. Since its inception in 1991, the Outreach Program has provided over 17,000 people with information about its services and primary care services throughout the greater New York area.

Until recently, this program received its funding from Medical Health Research Associates, Inc. (MHRA) with Ryan White Title I funds. However, as of November 14, 1997, the AICH HIV/AIDS Project was denied approval of two grant applications for promoting access to early intervention and case management services. The MHRA of New York City, the very agency allocating funds for Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Emergency Act Title I, was responsible for repealing funding. This decision will result in the shut down of the AICH Project by the end of February, 1998.

The implications of this project termination are profound as thousands of Native Americans surviving with HIV/AIDS will be left without culturally appropriate means for dealing with HIV/AIDS and the accompanying hardships. Further, in a time when HIV/AIDS studies-conducted by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)-exclude or underrepresent Native Americans, any services benefiting and or supporting this population are imperative. In addition, according to Teresa Diaz, MD of the CDC, the number of AIDS cases among Native Americans is likely to be an underestimation due to ethnic misclassification. In fact, the percentage of cases mis- or underrepresented among Native Americans may be as high as 21%.

In a 1994 issue of *AIDS Weekly*, publisher Charles Henderson writes that as of August 1994, there have been 818 reported AIDS cases among Native Americans nationwide. It is believed that many cases go unreported due to denial and the fact that many tribal leaders do not consider AIDS

education a priority. Tom Lidot, coordinator of an AIDS education program for California-based Indian Health Council Inc., says "You are talking about a community

that is isolated in the world, a place that has its own values and traditions. And we have leaders-leaders chosen for their age and wisdom who dictate values. If they feel that AIDS is a threat for any reason, then, yeah, the blockades go up."

According to the Phoenix Indian Medical Center, AIDS cases among Native Americans increased by 20% during 1996-a rate 20% higher than the general population. Further, once diagnosed, Native Americans with HIV/AIDS have a shorter life span by 50% compared to any other ethnic group reports Constance James, the medical center spokeswoman.

The conservation of protective services for Native Americans is required to sustain this dwindling population. Unfortunately, one vital service provided by AICH functioning to preserve Native Americans has been expunged and will lead to further decline of the Native American population. As Rosemary Richmond, Executive Director of the American Indian Community House articulates, "the ability of the American Indian Community House to conduct outreach, for the purpose of accessing HIV related services to our community has been dealt a devastating blow. Many lives of our community are now at stake."

Sources:

www.abest.com/aiachnyc/htm
AIDS Weekly, September 26, 1994, p. 10(2) and
 December 16, 1996 p. 5(1).

FOR MORE INFO

Contact the American Indian
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 (212) 598-0100 x.255.



The Educational Future of Cree

by Marcela Betzer

The Cree School Board recently introduced Cree as a language of instruction, a huge step forward from the mentality of the residential schools of previous years. Residential schools that instructed Cree children in English or French, believed that Cree was not a sufficient language to study. Former Chairman of the Cree School Board, Luke MacLeod, asserts that the Cree should learn and study in their own language and that French and English should also be learned, but as secondary languages.

The introduction of Cree as a language of instruction occurred in the midst of drafting the Cree Education Act. This act places local schools under the direction of local communities and extends Cree School Board leadership positions from one to three years, among other provisions. The Cree people expressed positive opinions when consulted about the Cree Education Act. They see the Cree School Board as having a "central role in preserving and strengthening the Cree language, culture, and values."

The success of Cree as a language of instruction is already apparent. Educators within the program agree that since the introduction of Cree, children have been able to learn more easily because they understand their teachers without the need for translation and learn the Cree values inherent in the language as they learn to read and write. Children are introduced to French and English in the third grade when they are more prepared to immerse themselves in another language.

However, the new program faces a few problems. Cree parents concerned with their children's inevitable future interaction with English and French are

BRIEFLY NOTED

not convinced yet that the change is for the better. The parents do not understand why Cree should be taught at school if it is spoken at home and are on the whole more interested in their children learning French and English, possibly a residual impact of the Residential schools' mentality. The program is also hoping to improve their libraries as they have very few texts with Cree syllabics in their libraries for the students' use.

The Cree School Board is hosting an upcoming conference entitled Cree Language and Cultural Conference with the theme Remembering our Children in hopes of outlining its future goals and providing evaluation and direction for the participants. Also, another hope is that other Native groups in Canada will be interested in what the Cree School Board is doing and will generate ideas to use their own languages for instruction for their people.

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Yothu Yindi Provides Much-Needed Bridge Between Cultural Gaps

by Lara Zielin

Out of the continually diversifying realm of music, Yothu Yindi (pronounced Yo-thoo yin-dee) has emerged as a band which combines traditional aboriginal Yolngu music with non-aboriginal Balanda music. The importance of the music's cultural amalgamation is more than just a triumph over cacophony. The assimilation of "traditional song cycles of the Gumatj and Rirratjingu clans of the North-East Arnhem land" into mainstream music has helped foster a deeper understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures. By pro-

moting aboriginal music, Yothu Yindi also promotes awareness of issues pertaining to Yolngu culture, including land and resource struggles in which the Yolngu are involved.

One of Yothu Yindi's founding members is Mandawuy Yunupingu, the recipient of Australia's 1992 Australian of the Year Award and the first person from Arnhem Land to gain a university degree. Yunupingu is responsible for much of the band's music and lyrics, including "Treaty," a song from Yothu Yindi's *Tribal Voice* album. Treaty, written in the Gumatj language is "a plea for recognition sparked by former Australian prime minister Bob Hawke's commitment to negotiate a [land and resource] treaty" between the descendants of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Australia. Yunupingu is familiar with the process of land and resource negotiation. His father was one of the leaders of the Gumatj and Rirratjingu clans who presented petitions to the Australian government in the 1960s asking for recognition of aboriginal claims to land. The petition, written on bark, led to the establishment of the Woodward Aboriginal Land Commission of 1973 and 1974 "which prepared a blueprint for vesting Aboriginal land rights in the...Northern Territory. The blueprint, enacted in 1976, was used to design a land rights law applicable to the history and conditions in the Northern Territory."

Yothu Yindi's ability to promote and address aboriginal issues stems from the band's successful navigation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures. The band keeps its finger on the pulse of its clan members through tribal consultation, but also utilizes white culture to



Yothu Yindi founder Mandawuy Yunupingu with a yidaki (traditional aboriginal instrument) player.

vocalize the clan's concerns. Yunupingu conveyed to *Rolling Stone* magazine that, "[Yothu Yindi] operate[s] in two aspects of reality. One is restricted (sacred); the other is unrestricted (public). That is why I find it easy to come into the white man's world and operate, then go back to my world without fear of losing it. I'm using white man's skills, Yolngu skills and putting them together for a new beginning."

Anthropologist Helen Ross suggests that successful communication between aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures must begin with an understanding of both cultures, which Yunupingu and Yothu Yindi possess. Ross maintains that miscommunication is all too common among aboriginal and non-aboriginal negotiation processes due to a failure to understand cultural norms. For example, timing, consultation, and value systems are cultural issues which can convolute negotiations for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples, pivoting on a lack of understanding about how the

BRIEFLY NOTED

FOR MORE INFO

If you are interested in obtaining Yothu Yindi's music, contact www.mushroom.com.



ing awareness and understanding of aboriginal culture with the rest of the world, has helped negotiate tenants between aboriginal and non-aboriginal culture, with tangible results.

Sources:

Ross, Helen. 1995. "Aboriginal Australians' Cultural Norms for Negotiating Natural Resources," in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*; 19:3, pp. 33-38.

Yothu Yindi's website: www.yothuyindi.com

1986. "Aboriginal Land Rights in Australia," in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*; 10:2. Adapted from "Watching Brief on Land Rights" by Jon Aliman and Michael Dillon in *Australian Society*, June 1985.

Threat of Maya Land Destruction

by Nancy Silva

The Maya Itza are one of the Mayan linguistic groups in Guatemala still in existence; however, the group is struggling with a major threat to their cultural survival. The Itza are trying to preserve their municipal forests that may be destroyed. In order to save their lands from mass destruction, in 1991, they established the Committee of the Biosfera Itza Reserve. With this effort the Itza hoped they could banish any plans of demolition of the forests. Though this was a great effort on their part, it was not enough to halt the grand plans of greed already in process. The current Mayor of San Jose decided it would be more profitable to break up the original committee and replace it with immigrants who have a strong desire to terminate the forests, thus creating room for agricultural plots. In addition, the Mayor's new plans include the improvement of roads within his municipality. As payment for the labor the Mayor has

issues differ between groups. Yothu Yindi, by promot-

agreed to give the logging company, Barren Commercial, logs from the municipal ejido lands; ejido referring to a collectively owned land unit. The Biosfera Itza Reserve is one of the areas of the municipal ejido lands that is still forested. The logging of these forests will make this area "accessible, subjecting these areas to further disturbance that is often more severe than the logging itself" according to an advisor to the Environment Department of the World Bank, Robert Goodland's book, *Race To Save The Tropics*. If the Mayor is successful these lands will soon experience their last rainfall.

The Bio Itza Committee has hired a lawyer to protect themselves from the illegal actions that the mayor has undertaken, such as accusing the Committee of acting irresponsibly and attempting to confiscate all material donations collected

by the group. Also, the Mayor violated new Guatemalan laws which allow the Maya people to participate in the management and protection of their lands. According to Goodland, the actions of "the widespread pattern of forest exploitation are both environmentally and economically costly."

In order for this crisis to gain the attention it deserves your support is necessary. The Maya Itza are in urgent need of justice for their survival. The time of action is now,

please send letters and financial contributions to the address below.

Sources:

The Ecology Foundation: ecologic@igc.org.

Goodland, Robert. ed. *Race To Save The Tropics: Ecology and Economics for a Sustainable Future*. Island Press: Washington, D.C.

FOR MORE INFO

EcoLogic Development Fund c/o the Bio Itza Committee Legal Fund, P.O. Box 383405



Cambridge, MA 02238-3405 tel.(617)441-6300, fax(617)441-6307

Photo: Ecology Development Fund



Members of the Bio Itza Association working in the reserve.

CS BULLETIN BOARD

Cultural Survival Welcomes our Newest Members

(joined between 10/19/97 and 1/28/98)

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Candice Dugan	Aaron McEmrys	Austin College Library
Barbara Dugelby	Cindy Miller	Bruno-Manser-Fonds
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Deanna Elliott	Lena Mortensen	Cleveland Public Library
Scott Englander	Toshiyuki Nakazawa	Inter-American Development Bank
Lawrence M. Epstein	Anne Nelligan	Lange & Springer
Leah Ermarth	Eleanor Nickerson	Minneapolis Communication and Technology College
Christophe Evers	Christine Noonan	Mugar Memorial Library
Hilary Farmer	Rodney S. North	National Park Service, Denver
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Chris Gibson	Sarah Pope	University of Maryland,
Richard D. Glover	Jerome & Dorothy Preston	Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Education
Andreas Gobel	Mary Pulford	
Brooks Goddard	Shirley Reaves	
	Deldy Reyes	

Cultural Survival Receives Grant

Cultural Survival is proud to announce the award of a grant from the BridgeBuilders Foundation which will enable Cultural Survival to expand its Curriculum Resource Program (CRP). Cultural Survival extends its gratitude to the BridgeBuilders Foundation for recognizing the CRP's dedication to working within the local community to bring global issues into the classroom.

The BridgeBuilders Foundation's general goal is to support small, community-based organizations that work to build bridges between groups of people that differ with respect to race, ethnicity, age, gender, economic resources, and physical or mental ability. Specifically, BridgeBuilders funds projects that promote social, economic, and environmental justice. The trustees of the Foundation are particularly interested in programs that encourage young people to broaden their experience. Cultural Survival will use the BridgeBuilders Foundation grant to fund another student conference in 1998 and the CRP is looking forward to another successful experience with the local community.

Through the annual student conference, the CRP has provided high school students with the opportunity to further their knowledge about specific ethnic minorities such as the Chiapas Maya and the Aboriginal culture of Australia and also to understand many of the larger issues surrounding global minorities. Through the type of experience provided by Cultural Survival's CRP, students not only expand their knowledge of facts, but also gain conflict resolution and perspective-taking skills which they can then bring to other areas of their lives. Both students and teachers have expressed their enthusiasm for the student conference and about their experience in working with Cultural Survival.

The underlying goal of Cultural Survival's CRP is to educate students and the general public about issues surrounding multiculturalism and to instill the respect and understanding that global ethnic minorities command. The curriculum introduced by the program specifically seeks to break stereotypes which students hold in regard to global ethnic minorities by providing students with a variety of perspectives and resources to supplement regular textbooks. Through experiences like the student conference, students from different schools are able to share what they have learned with one another and to connect their personal experience to a global one.

Cultural Survival is grateful for the BridgeBuilders Foundation grant and looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the community.

by Felisa Brunschwig

BOOK REVIEW

Literacy, emotion, and authority Reading and writing on a Polynesian atoll

by Niho Besnier

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1995. xx, 224 pp., figures, maps, tables, orthography, glossary, and index. ISBN 0-521-48539-8

Review by Kenneth M. George, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon

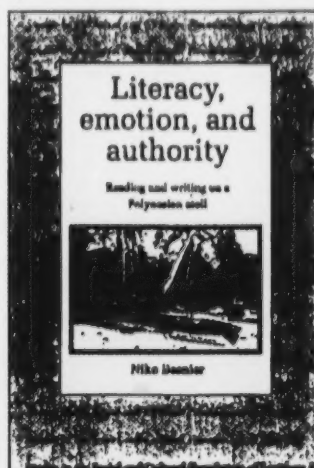
Niko Besnier's *Literacy, emotion, and authority* is a brilliant and painstaking ethnographic study of literacy on Nukulaelae Atoll, Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands). The book has special relevance for readers of *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, not so much because of its contemporary and historical portrait of this remote island community (pop. 347 [1979 census]), but rather because of its comparative implications for the way we think about literacy and social transformation in any society. In keeping with the most recent theoretical advances in the anthropology of literacy (which he covers in a wonderful and very thorough introductory chapter), Besnier treats literacy as a social practice. In this approach, the 'effects' of literacy are charted in the waters of social encounter and event. From this vantage point, writing and reading appear not so much as generalized technologies of communication or modes of cognition, rather, as particularistic and historically shaped practices that mediate politics, morality, emotions, and with them, human agency.

What Besnier shows so well in this study is that literacy is never a neutral or all-purpose means of communication. Literacy 'arrived' on Nukulaelae a little over a century ago during a time of British and Samoan missionization, Peruvian slave raids, and German plantation ventures. Reading and writing thus cannot be disentangled from the social tactics and strategies of codeswitching between the Nukulaelae dialect of Tuvaluan, Samoan, and other languages, from a history of schooling and religious conversion, or from the social and cultural currents of colonial and postcolonial political-economic formations. Literacy also appears in genres of greater or lesser importance: Not everything is written down or read in Nukulaelae, and that which is written and read takes particular and authoritative forms. Introduced with the purpose of getting Nukulaelae islanders to read the Bible, literacy subsequently came to include, and be dominated by, Nukulaelae

efforts to exchange letters, lists, and records of various kinds. At the time of Besnier's study, the textually dominant forms of Nukulaelae literacy were personal letters and sermons, forms that connected powerfully to matters of affect and authority, respectively.

Letter writing and reading are heterodox practices, to be sure, but Besnier discovered that affect was a conspicuous feature in virtually all discourse levels within letter exchanges. Integrated as they are into networks of gossip and economic transactions, the comingling of emotion and letter-exchanges show that the Nukulaelae speech community has managed to construct a culturally and ideologically specific form of literate practice. By way of contrast, written sermons evince a certain continuity with, and seizure of hegemonic forms of truth introduced in the colonial period. Their referential, grammatical, and pragmatic (or indexical) dimensions play a central role in the social construction and display of authority. His careful work with these two genres leads Besnier to argue that Nukulaelae is a showcase for an "incipient literacy" in which atoll inhabitants appear not as passive recipients of an autonomous and hegemonic structure of linguistic exchange, but as active agents in charge of their own communicative economy and destiny.

Full description of the ethnographic riches and theoretical discriminations made in Besnier's book would demand far more space than that allotted to this review. The appeal of this book for the specialist or the seminar room should be plain. But further, its suggestive findings are especially significant for the practical and intellectual work of those who deal with literacy as an ambivalent sign of community empowerment or disenfranchisement. Niko Besnier has produced a probing and exceedingly useful study of the highest caliber. Readers of *CSQ* will find this work immensely rewarding.



BOOK REVIEW

A Violência contra os Povos Indígenas no Brasil 1996

by CIMI-CNBB

CIMI-CNBB Brasília, 1997. 87 pp., illustrations, charts.

Review by David Maybury-Lewis, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University,
President and Founder of Cultural Survival

CIMI (the Indigenist Missionary Council) is affiliated with Brazil's National Council of Bishops. It was founded about the same time as Cultural Survival and both organizations have defended indigenous rights for just over a quarter of a century now. Sadly CIMI's recent publication entitled *Violence Against the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil* in 1996, makes depressing reading. It is a compilation of statistics with the minimum of commentary, concerning the many kinds of violence that are being visited on the indigenous peoples of Brazil.

CIMI claims that there were twice as many acts of violence committed against indigenous peoples in 1996 as there were in 1995. Although we cannot make a close analysis of CIMI's statistics, they do indicate beyond a reasonable doubt that aggression against Brazil's indigenous peoples has increased substantially. CIMI states that this is largely the result of an increasing number of conflicts over and invasions of indigenous lands. These were in turn prompted by the notorious decree no.1775, issued in January 1996, which the federal government formally made it possible for those considering themselves interested parties to contest the official demarcation of Indian lands. For years, the Brazilian government has failed to obey its own laws regarding the timetable for the demarcation of indigenous lands. Decree no.1775 compounded that omission by, in effect, inviting challenges to the boundaries of lands involved in the glacially slow process of demarcation. Worse still, according to the statistics, the leading perpetrators of violence against Indians in 1996 were representatives of state and municipal authorities whose

aggressions outnumbered those of ranchers or logging companies.

In some cases, campaigns against indigenous groups were effectively genocidal, bringing them to the verge of extinction. Twenty years ago a local landowner massacred all but 100 of the Ava-Canoeiro in the state of Goiás. In 1996 the construction of the Serra de Mesa hydroelectric plant on their lands without any accompanying measures to protect the Indians has

reduced them to less than 40 individuals. The Nambikwara in Mato Grosso are threatened with extinction now that their lands have been invaded by miners and loggers. A remote group in Rondonia is being wiped out by ranchers who claim their lands, even though the government's Indian Service has officially and fruitlessly denounced their murders. Meanwhile the Yanomami in Rondonia continue to suffer massive depopulation while about 8000 gold miners continue to work on their lands.

Where the authorities are not directly responsible for violence against Indians, the government regularly claims it is powerless to protect them because it lacks the resources to do so. This excuse has even been used in the Yanomami case even though the congress voted the money necessary to defend them. It seems that the root of the problem is that the Brazilian government not only lacks the will to protect the nation's indigenous peoples, but that it encourages policies that are leading to their physical and cultural extinction.

Note: This report is available through CIMI, SDS Edifício Venício III, salas 309 a 314, 70390-900, Brasília, DF, Caixa Postal 03679, 70084-970, Brasília, DF; tel: 061-225-9457, fax: 061-255-9401, e-mail: cimi@embratel.net.br.



SOURCES

PUBLICATIONS

Mas Antes:

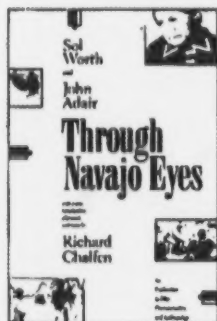
Hispanic Folklore of the Rio Puerco Valley

Nasario Garcia has invested his efforts in preserving the vivid memories of his Rio Puercoan culture. The book contains an extensive amount of the people's enriching history through colorful stories, songs, and letters. Although the valley has long ago been abandoned, *Mas Antes* offers the readers an excellent opportunity to understand the everyday life of its people.

Garcia, Nasario, Ed. Sante Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press. 1997. \$24.95 cloth, ISBN 0-89013-320-4. \$12.95 paper, ISBN 0-89013-323-9.

Through Navajo Eyes:

An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology



Authors Sol Worth and John Adair, decided to see what would take place if they taught people who never used or made motion pictures before to do just that.

This book is a chronicle of film making and editing involving a group of six Navajo Indians in Arizona. They offer readers the rare chance to attain a broader understanding of the importance of the experiment. The book has cast a strong visual influence in the disciplines of visual anthropology, communications, and film.

Worth, Sol and John Adair. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1997. \$19.95 paper, ISBN 0-8263-1771-5.

Ashkenazi Jews in Mexico: Ideologies in the Structuring of a Community

Adina Cimet takes a detailed outlook into the Jewish population of Mexico and the uncertainties they face today. The book also explores the problem of ethnic identity and the survival of their culture. Cimet offers her readers a possibility to learn more about the issues Jews must confront by living in a land so culturally complex.

Cimet, Adina. Albany: State University of New York Press. 1997. \$19.95 paper, ISBN 0-7914-3180-0.

A Condor Brings the Sun



This novel by Jerry McGahan follows the struggles of 23 generations of native Peruvians. The story is focused on a woman named Pilar who, living in the ancient Runa culture

of Peru, endures continual threats made to her survival, serenity, and strength of mind. With this novel McGahan creates a convincing story of a woman discovering self-identity and love in a world full of conflict and confusion.

McGahan, Jerry. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. 1996. \$25.00 cloth, ISBN 0-87156-354-1.

The Tibetan Art of Parenting: From Before Conception Through Early Childhood



This book offers new and future parents a unique perspective on parenting. By dividing the book into seven steps of childbearing: preconception, conception, gestation, birthing, bonding, infancy, and early childhood, parents can get fresh tips to

any stage of early parenting. Also included is an epilogue of further teachings from the Tibetan heritage that are sure to enrich and educate all readers.

Maiden, Anne H. and Edie Farwell. Boston: Wisdom Publications. 1997. \$16.95 paper, ISBN 0-86171-129-7.

MUSIC

Prairie Plain Song



This collection of well-crafted flute melodies is sure to put anyone's mind at peace. In the background, beautiful sounds of nature: bird songs, ocean waves, and rainfall can be heard. Al Jewer draws the listeners to a place of serenity and escape.

Al Jewer c/o Laughing Cat Studio, 11537 Walnut Lane, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538.

Music of Indonesia:

Music of Biak, Irian Jaya

Music of Indonesia offers an array of pleasurable sounds and rhythms of Biak, Irian Jaya. In this recording, tradition meets the new and the result is a delightful mixture of dance music and meditation. This assortment of music is sure to stir anyone away from the ordinary.

Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, 935 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600, MRC 914, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, SF CD 40426.

Lotus Signatures



This recording is both lively and spiritual, transplanting the listener to a world full of mysticism. These melodies capture the essence of south India. The world renowned bamboo

SOURCES

flute player, Dr. N. Ramani, shares center stage with the gifted Negai Muralidaran on violin, Trichy Sankaran on the *mrđangam*, V. Nagarajan on the *hanjira*, E. M. Subramaniam on the *ghatam*, and A. Kannan playing the *morsing*.

Music of the World, Ltd., P.O. Box 3620, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3620.

Steven Cragg Discovery

This is a combination of special effects, natural sounds, and voice samples of African, Australian, and Tibetan cultures. To get this unique sound, Steven Cragg focused on the varying sounds of the *didgeridoo*, a traditional Aboriginal instrument of Australia. Discovery is a delight to hear whether in a car, or at home.

Steven Cragg, *New World Music Limited, The Barn, Becks Green, St., Andrews, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 8NB England. Tel. 01986-781682.*

VIDEO

Kings of the Jungle:

The Story of Claudio and Orlando Villas Boas

This video focuses on two brothers and their dedication to a cause they have fought for 30 years. At first they intended to open up the jungle by building a series of air strips connected by roads which would, inevitably, devastate the forest. They quickly realized the tragic outcome that would result if they followed through with their plan. Not only would their plan cause irreversible effects on the land by depleting the resources, but it would drive the natives out of their natural habitat as well. This documentary traces the steps that they both took in defending the rights of the natives and the land.

Produced and directed by Chris Christophe. 1992, Argonaut Productions, Ltd. 51 minutes. Bullfrog Films, Inc., Oley, PA 19547. Tel: 215-779-8226.

Faces of the Hand

This movie is an expedition into the everyday way our hands express culture and personality. By venturing through a varied range of cultures and personal experience, we gain a better insight into the importance our hands play in expression. Our hands are powerful and can both heal and destroy the world around us. Through this unique film we are able to see the ways that different cultures make use of their fine tools of communication. This film is an amazing combination of science, poetry, and anthropology as it explores various ways our hands communicate with the rest of the world.

Producer: Kent Martin. Director: Tamas Wormser. 1995, National Film Board of Canada, Studio B. 28 minutes and 03 seconds. Bullfrog Films, Box 149, Oley, PA 19547. Tel: 610-779-8226.

EVENTS

HURIDOCS Conference on Human Rights and Information

March 22-26, Tunisia

HURIDOCS Task Forces present a conference on software and electronic communication among human rights organizations.

Contact HURIDOCS, 2, rue Jean-Jaquet, CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland, fax: 41-22-7411768, e-mail: huridocs@oln.comlink.apc.org

Human Rights Committee 62nd Session

**March 23-April 9, 1998
Geneva Switzerland**

Contact: UN Centre for Human Rights, Geneva Office, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Earth Day

April 22

Check local listings for events in your area.

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

April 27-May 15

Geneva, Switzerland

Reports that will be considered: Sri Lanka (Initial), Uruguay (2nd), Cyprus (3rd), and Netherlands (2nd).

Contact: UN Centre for Human Rights, Geneva Office, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

British Council International Seminar on Human Rights-Their Protection at a National Level

May 10-16

Belfast, Northern Ireland

Contact: International Seminars, The British Council, 1 Beaumont Place, OXI 2PJ, UK, e-mail: international.seminars@brit-coun.org

Zimbabwean Music Festival

May 29-31

Victoria British Columbia, Canada

Contact: Zimbabwean Music Festival, 1921 Fernwood Road, Victoria BC V8T 2Y6, Canada, tel: 1-250 384-1997, fax: 1-250-388-5258, e-mail: zimfest@islandnet.com, website: www.zimfest.org (coming soon).

Indigenous Perspectives in Ecuador

May 18-31

Minneapolis, MN

The Center for Global Education presents an educational travel seminar exploring the growing empowerment of indigenous people in Ecuador.

Contact: Center for Global Education, Augsburg College, 2211 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55454, 800-299-8889, e-mail: globaled@augsburg.edu.

SPECIAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Orang Asli Assistance Fund

Project Site: Peninsular Malaysia
Coordinators: Kirk Endicott and Adela Baer

"During the war with the Japanese, we were forced to move from our settlement. During the war with the communists, we were also forced to move. And now, we are again forced to move. Is this the war of the government?...We are not nomads. The government keeps telling us to stay put in one place. But now it is the government that is forcing us to move!"

The Orang Asli, meaning 'Original People,' number about 90,000 in 19 culturally distinct groups and traditionally lived in villages and camps scattered across the Malay Peninsula, from the mangrove swamps of the coast to the rainforest of the interior. Since 1960, however, the majority of Orang Asli have been displaced from their homes by development projects, including logging, plantations, mines, dams, highways, power lines, golf courses, airports, universities, and housing subdivisions. The few Orang Asli still living in their hereditary areas fear that they too will be forced to move. Their fears are well-founded. Under Malaysian laws, Orang Asli have no legal claim to their land; they are 'squatters' on state land. State and federal governments can seize any land, even in the few designated Orang Asli reserves, for any purpose. Until recently, the only compensation the governments had to pay was a nominal amount for destroyed fruit trees.

Today, most displaced Orang Asli live in government-sponsored regroupment schemes, desolate settlements in logged-off wastelands with minimal facilities and inadequate land to support the population.

Without adequate land and resources, people can no longer support themselves by subsistence foraging, farming, or selling crops and forest products. Most individuals lack the education and skills needed for anything but menial labor in the modern market economy. Government statistics for 1997 show that 81% of Orang Asli live below the official poverty line, and 50% are classed as *termiskin*, the poorest of the poor.

To the Malay-dominated Malaysian government, one problem concerning Orang Asli is that their very existence contradicts the official ideology that Malays are the indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia. The government's solution is to assimilate all Orang Asli into the Malay ethnic group, causing them to disappear as a distinct category of people. To become Malays, Orang Asli must become Muslims and adopt the Malay language and customs. Despite the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, the government has poured millions of dollars into mostly unsuccessful efforts to convert Orang Asli to Islam. Since 1991, it has built Muslim chapels and posted missionaries in over 250 settlements. Following a policy

called 'positive discrimination,' it has rewarded individuals and communities who adopt Islam and neglected those who do not. The government has tried to create a situation in which the only way Orang Asli can gain the rights and protections afforded other citizens is to cease being Orang Asli.

Most Orang Asli want to participate in the nation's growing prosperity, but do not want to have to give up their ethnic identities, religions, languages, and customs.

In 1991, a group of distinguished Orang Asli leaders drew up a list of urgent needs of Orang Asli. They called for the same rights and privileges as Malays; land rights; economic development; better infrastructure, education, and health care; recognition of their right to maintain their cultures and religions; political representation at the state and national levels; and revision of the act that gives

the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (JHEOA) absolute control over Orang Asli. So far the government has ignored this memorandum, although for bureaucratic reasons, it has transferred education and health care from the JHEOA to the Ministries of Education and Health. The JHEOA tries to undermine or co-opt any



A Batch father bathing his young daughter, while a son, who is afflicted with spinal tuberculosis, bathes himself (1976).

SPECIAL PROJECTS UPDATE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on Orang Asli and the Orang Asli Assistance Fund, please see the book mentioned below consult the Orang Asli Assistance Fund web site at www.dartmouth.edu/~asli,



or contact the Fund coordinators, Kirk Endicott, Department of Anthropology, Dartmouth College, 6047 Carpenter Hall, Hanover, NH 03755-3570; email: kirk.endicott@dartmouth.edu or Adela Baer, Department of Zoology, Oregon State University, Cordley Hall 3029, Corvallis, OR 97331-2914; email: baera@ava.bcc.orst.edu.

individuals or organizations opposing the assimilation policy.

The Orang Asli Assistance Fund was established in 1997 by anthropologists Robert K. Dentan, Kirk Endicott, and Alberto Gomes; Malaysian law specialist M. Barry Hooker; and Orang Asli health specialist Adela Baer. The first four are co-authors of *Malaysia and the "Original People": A Case Study of the Impact of Development on Indigenous People* in the Cultural Survival Studies in Ethnicity and Change which describes in detail the problems and aspirations of Orang Asli today. All royalties from the book go to the Orang Asli Assistance Fund.

The general aim of the Fund is to help empower Orang Asli to achieve their own goals. This includes supporting the activities of independent Orang Asli and pro-Orang Asli organizations in Malaysia. Currently only three exist: the Association of Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia (POASM), the Center for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC), and the Indigenous Peoples Network of Malaysia. Specific purposes for which funds will be used include forming and strengthening Orang Asli organizations, education, legal actions, health care programs, publicity and lobbying, and emergency assistance.

A recent Malaysian court decision gives reason for optimism that such efforts can help. For the first time a court ruled that a state government (Johor) must pay substantial compensation to an Orang Asli community that lost its land due to construction of

a dam. We hope that similar legal actions will be successful in other parts of the Peninsula, where Orang Asli have been displaced for the benefit of others.

Bibliography

- Dentan, Robert K., et al. *Malaysia and the "Original People": A Case Study of the Impact of Development on Indigenous People*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.
- Nicholas, Colin. "Orang Asli and Development: Chased Away for a Runway." *Pemlot Gah: Orang Asli News* 3:5-6, 1991.

Special Projects are independent initiatives that aim to empower indigenous peoples in areas that are basic to their self-determination. Special Projects seek to preserve, protect and promote the rights of indigenous people through various means, such as obtaining land rights, providing health or legal services, managing natural resources, or marketing sustainable sourced products. Cultural Survival does not directly fund projects; however, it serves as fiscal sponsor to enable projects to pursue grants through U.S. foundations and tax-deductible contributions from private donors. In addition to the benefit from our tax-exempt status, Special Projects are publicized in our publications (most notably the *Cultural Survival Quarterly*), promotional literature, on our website (www.cs.org), and in appeals to our members. Cultural Survival has a long-standing commitment to working in defense of indigenous rights, and all of our Special Projects complement that mission.

Donations and Project Proposals

To submit a proposal for a Special Project, please contact the Projects Coordinator at Cultural Survival for guidelines, or review them on the Cultural Survival homepage (<http://www.cs.org>). Donations for a specific Special Project can be sent by check,

The Appeal

We welcome donations to assist the Orang Asli in achieving the health, education, prosperity, and rights they deserve as indigenous Malaysian citizens, including the right to be themselves. Please send your donations to:

Cultural Survival
Orang Asli Assistance Fund
96 Mt. Auburn St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

money order or credit card to Cultural Survival/Special Projects, 96 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Tel. 617-441-5400, Fax: 617-441-5417. Please specify to which project you are donating.

Special Projects and Coordinators

Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco (formerly Chinchero Culture Project)
Nilida Callañaupa, Coordinator

Ersari Turkmen Vegetable Dye Weaving Project and Tibetan Rug Weaving Project
Chris Walter, Coordinator

The Garifuna Journey
Andrea Leland, Kathy Berger, Coordinators

Gwich'in Environmental Knowledge Project
Gleb Raygorodetsky, Coordinator

Ituri Forest People's Fund
David Wilkie, Gilda Morelli, Bryan Curran, Robert Bailey, Coordinators

FOMMA (La Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya)
Miriam Laughlin, Coordinator

Maya Manche Scholarship Fund (formerly Kekchi High School Scholarship Fund)
Richard Wilk, Coordinator

Orang Asli Assistance Fund
Kirk Endicott, Adela S. Baer, Coordinators

Sna Jtz'ibajom, Chiapas Writers' Cooperative
Robert Laughlin, Coordinator

The Suyd Project
Anthony Seeger, Coordinator

Tibetan School Project
Nancy Mayo-Smith, Coordinator

Xavante Education Fund
Laura Graham, Coordinator

Navajo Indian Voices and Faces Testify to the Legacy of Uranium Mining

by Doug Brugge and Timothy Benally

The Navajo nation covers a vast stretch of northeastern Arizona and parts of New Mexico and Utah in the southwestern United States. It is home to the majority of the more than 200,000 members of the Navajo tribe that live in sparsely populated small towns and isolated homesteads that dot the countryside. The Navajo lands range from desolate stretches of rock and dirt to lush mountains, from strikingly beautiful sandstone canyons to volcanic stone monuments that rise precipitously above the plains.

The Navajo nation is also home to almost 1100 abandoned uranium mines and four former uranium mills, a legacy of the cold war that has left scars on the land and the people to this day. It is the Navajo nuclear experience, their unresolved grievances, and the need to heal old wounds that prompted a team of Navajos and supportive whites to undertake the Navajo Uranium Miner Oral History and Photography Project.

Historical Perspective

The Treaty of 1868 established the U.S. government's responsibility for Navajo economic, education, and health services. In the early 1940s, the Navajo nation was still recovering from the devastating livestock reduction period of the 1930s. To meet the economic gap that was created by the livestock reduction, Navajo men sought work away from the reservation on railroads in the western states. Employment opportunities consisted of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), traders on the reservation, and a few of the border town businesses where employment was based on one's level of education. When World War II broke out, many Navajo men aborted their

education and went into the military; the few high schools on the Navajo reservation were closed for lack of students.

As the U.S. entered the nuclear age, the Navajo Nation was still struggling economically. Due to the U.S. government's demand for uranium, mining boomed in the Four Corners area. On the Navajo reservation, uranium was discovered in Cove, Arizona and then on other parts of the reservation and work became readily available. When the mines started on the reservation, most families were very thankful that they had employment and expressed such sentiments to the Office of the Navajo Uranium Workers (ONUW):

"We were glad that our husbands had jobs and that they didn't have to go away to other places to do railroad work...But what the people that operated these mines did not tell the Navajo people was that danger was associated with uranium mining. If they had told us that danger was there, we might have done something else to find employment."

The U.S. government and the mining companies knew of the health hazards of uranium mining; the Public Health Service even conducted a study to document the development of illnesses that they expected. The miners and the



Mary Frank is the widow of a former uranium miner who died in 1994. She lives in Shiprock, Cove and Red Valley in the Navajo nation.

UPDATE *Native North America*

widows however, were never informed of such health hazards and had to find out about the danger on their own. The doctors didn't know what was wrong with their husbands until they were diagnosed with lung cancer. As a result, many Navajo women became widows and had to take on men's roles in the household like chopping the wood, hauling wood and water, feeding livestock, and so forth. For the widows and children, losing their husbands and fathers created great hardships.

In 1960, the widows came together and talked about the nature of their husbands' deaths. The meetings had a snowball effect and they formed a committee. The Navajo communities hired an attorney to assist them in their struggle and after many years, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) was passed in 1990. Its purpose was to provide "compassionate compensation" to miners and their survivors. Unfortunately, RECA has fallen short of being just compensation since many former miners and their families continue to have their claims denied.

The Project Concept

The project's goal has been to use oral histories and visual images to produce a book and exhibit (accompanied by a short video tape) consisting of the personal reflection of Navajos who were part of this series of events. Each aspect of the project was envisioned as being something that would continually be available to Navajo miners, their families, and their communities.

Oral history was chosen as a method because it lets the people speak for themselves. Unlike traditional documentaries, oral history does not lend itself to simple or convenient interpretation, nor is it as straight forward or superficially precise as quantitative science. We saw this as an advantage since we agree with Paul Thompson that "[r]eality is complex and many-sided; and it is a primary merit of oral history that to a much greater extent than most sources it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated."



Joe Ray Harvey (left) and Phil Harrison (right) stand on Cove Mesa in 1995. One area of the Navajo nation that is peppered with abandoned uranium mines.

Oral history was, of course, the first kind of history and it still has a strong place in the Navajo culture. Black and white photography and video were seen as key accompaniments to the oral statements. By using a method that resonated with Navajo traditions, we hoped to produce something that was of greater relevance to the Navajo people and to facilitate a process by which people with little access to larger audiences could 'speak' relatively directly to other Navajos and the general population of the U.S. Therefore by using oral histories, Navajos affected by uranium mining could preserve their own interpretation of what uranium mining represented in their lives.

The purpose of the project was conceived to produce materials (principally the book and exhibit) which would serve multiple functions and have an impact in a variety of spheres. Education of both Navajo and non-Navajo audiences was our most important reason for undertaking the project. Though many Navajos are familiar with the uranium mining experience, many more live at a distance from mining areas or are too young to know first-hand and failed to pick up the history of uranium.

Beyond the boundaries of Navajo country, there was a need to spread the word of how Navajos had been affected

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by uranium mining. Too often, there was broad national consciousness and controversy about the effects of nuclear power and the use of atomic weapons, but little or no knowledge about how the first steps in the nuclear cycle had damaged the health and impacted the lives of Native Americans, arguably one of the populations in the U.S. that has suffered the most from the development of nuclear technology. By educating a broad sector of the public, we could contribute to campaigns that aimed to remedy or redress the historical injustices the Navajo had been subjected to. As part of this aspect of the project, we anticipated distribution of the book to policy makers at the level of the tribal government and to the U.S. and state governments.

In general, we felt that the oral histories and images would create a valuable addition to the historical record. While a major book had been published which documented the main historical events from a journalistic perspective, this project was intended to be more accessible to people who would be unlikely to purchase or read a lengthy book. In addition, the oral history format would put the

voices of the affected people at the forefront since there would be no interpretive element.

The use of the materials that we developed can also be used as Navajo language teaching tools. The oral statements were preserved in both Navajo and English and should be usable by Navajo language instructors. Because the Navajo language is being lost among younger generations, there is merit in contributing to efforts preserving it. In addition, we are trying to identify areas needing environmental research based on the issues raised in the interviews.

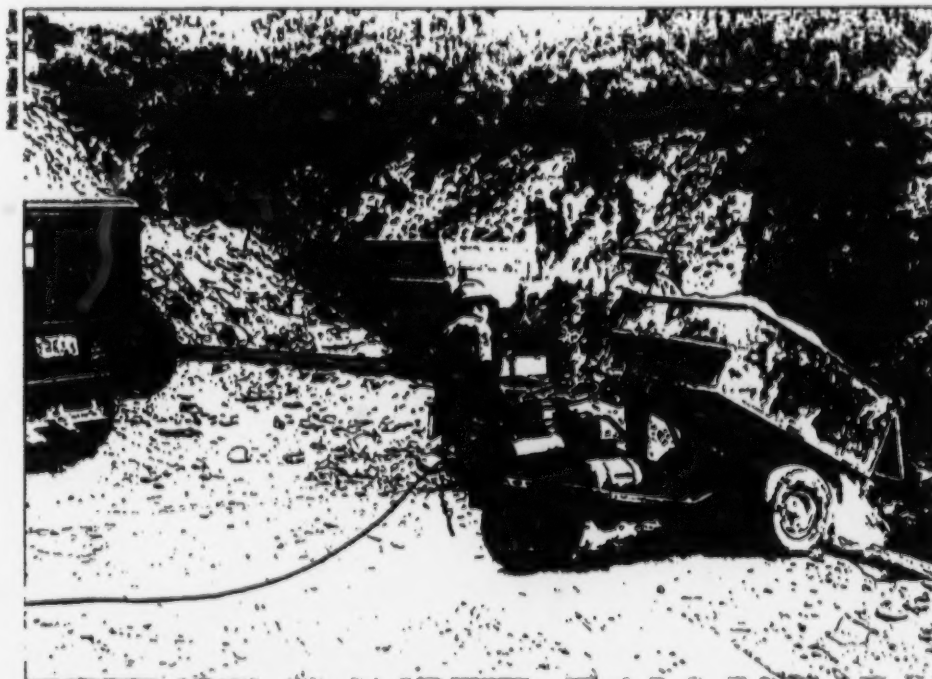
Project Method

The overall framework of the project was a university-community collaboration between Tufts University School of Medicine and a pool of individuals, community organizations, and tribal agencies. The tribal office of ONUW, the Uranium Radiation Victims Committee (URVC) and Dine' College (formerly Navajo Community College) were the central groups to the collection of interviews and their processing into the book and exhibit.

Funding was obtained from four sources (U.S. E.P.A.,

Ruth Mott Fund, Ford Foundation and Education Foundation of America) and over 100 small donors during the course of the project. The interviews were conducted by Timothy Benally (then director of the ONUW) and Phil Harrison (URVC). Martha Austin-Garrison and Lydia Fasthorse-Begay transcribed the tapes into written Navajo.

The majority of interviews were conducted in Navajo. Persons interviewed were primarily former miners, widows of miners, and a few children of miners. We wanted to include the perspective not only of the workers themselves, but also of family members whose lives were affected by the experience. People who were related to deceased miners gave the most emotionally charged interviews.



Navajos work a uranium mine in the area around Cove in the Navajo nation in the 1950s. It was common practice to dump low grade ore over the side of the mesa into tailing piles that remain radioactive to this day.

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We were also asked by interviewees to ensure that our work would not result in a profit-making product or in money being earned by people other than those in the mining communities.

Complete sets of the audio tapes, photographic negatives, contact sheets, video footage, transcripts, and translations are now archived at the University of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation Museum. The archives hold open the possibility that they will be used for other non-commercial projects in the future. An unplanned offer has also led to inclusion of the exhibit in a cyber gallery on the World Wide Web (www-busph.bu.edu/gallery).

Results and Conclusions

Perhaps the most visible result of the project to date has been the widespread dissemination of the book. We printed 2,000 copies, most of which have been distributed and we are initiating a second printing. The majority were provided free of charge to a variety of Navajo audiences. The greatest number have been given to people in the mining communities. These communities have shown great interest in the book because it records the images and words of people that they know.

Copies have also been given to schools and colleges and Navajo communities grappling with proposals for new leachate uranium mining. It is unlikely that many other publications based on the knowledge of the Navajo have been so accessible to Navajos. Two Navajos who reviewed the book both came to favorable conclusions. One wrote:

"The Navajo men and women...were photographed in positions of telling their stories from their heart and soul ...[t]heir facial lines, their hand gestures, their intense eyes glowing—all these and more nonverbal map of Navajo uranium experiences bring harsh reality to something that...happened years ago, before our times."

The book has been targeted to the U.S. E.P.A. and U.S. Department of Justice officials. Efforts to target a broader sector of policy makers, including elected officials, are expected to expand in 1998 in conjunction with a growing campaign to reform the federal RECA compensation process and our national tour of the exhibit which begins in April 1998 at Dene' College, Tsaile, Arizona.

Our primary objective, the education of Navajo and non-Navajo audiences, has been successful and will likely continue for some time. As our book and exhibit gained greater exposure, we were approached by a consortium of

ten Native American tribes to assist them with a their project to documenting the Indian point of view that was omitted from U.S. Department of Energy's summary of environmental impacts of the Cold War. We have also held a workshop with school teachers at Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico, site of a massive open pit uranium mine, so that their students could undertake a similar project.

This, along with the general utility of the book and exhibit and the positive reaction that we observe in people who see our work, leads us to believe that there is a common thread in the nature and form of the project. We think that it serves as a complement to the technical reports and statistics that tend to dominate environmental issues. Communities want something that is more fully their own, that expresses what they think and feel, and we hope that more communities will undertake efforts of this sort in the future.

Doug Brugge is director of the project and is on the faculty of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, Massachusetts.

Timothy Benally is a bilingual Navajo, a former uranium miner, a veteran of the Korean War, and the Director of the Uranium Education Center at Dine' College in Shiprock, New Mexico.

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NOTES from the FIELD

Guarani Educational Politics and Multicultural State-Making in Bolivia

by Bret Gustafson

Whom does 'indigenous education' serve? In Bolivia, recent reforms have opened new possibilities for indigenous peoples. Of these, will bilingual education promote more indigenous autonomy? Or is state education, now translated into native languages, a more effective tool of assimilation for the 21st century? Where do ethnic and power politics fit into schooling and curriculum in the Guarani region of Bolivia?

The Traditional School

The Guarani, like most of America's native peoples, were long targeted by missionaries, soldiers, and bureaucrats. The goal, if not annihilation, was incorporation into Bolivian life either as good Catholics, good proletarians, or now, good citizens. Where warfare and Franciscan missions failed, the rural schoolhouse and Hispanic teachers took up the modernizing task after the Revolution of 1952.

These schools primarily served the state and the ethnic status quo. The non-Indian teachers from towns and ranches taught like petty dictators. Like missionaries who extirpated idols, the Charagua teachers' school had a mission of *castellanización*: extirpate the Guarani language and domesticate and civilize the Indians. Amid barefoot Guarani, these *profesores* literally polished their shoes and taught with stick-in-hand to form new men. Far from revolutionary, this pedagogy



Guarani literacy brigades are introduced to written Guarani

of the oppressed was effective for controlling, not for learning. The all-Spanish curriculum included repetition, dictation, and physical abuse (kneeling on kernels of maize, ear twisting, and beatings) for speaking Guarani in class. Spanish shouted at Guarani children serve to silence and humiliate; adults today remember the school with fear.

Not much has changed since Franciscans forbade long hair and lip plugs, provided clothes, and taught rote catechism in past centuries. Of late, children absorb patriotism by memorizing civic dates and heroes and line up like soldiers each morning to salute the flag and sing the national anthem. The anthem's last line, *morir antes que esclavos vivir* (die before living as slaves), should have resonance with Guarani peasants. However, monolingual children sing in rephonicized Spanish, *mboriákehekaravovivi*, which means nothing. Most Guarani acquiesce to

these practices as appropriation of the cultural capital of the *karai* or non-Indian school.

The Guarani language is slowly disappearing. "We are more advanced than [nearby] Eiti, they still speak Guarani" said one Guarani in Ipitacito. This internalization of state ideologies comes only after centuries of resistance. In 1760, while Guarani fought missions and colonists, headman Guarikaya of Pipiriri refused baptism by priests "my grandparents weren't Christians. I want to go to hell with them." Today only one village out of several hundred refuses education "we don't want priests or schools, we will not forget our fathers' words."

Other Guarani resist indirectly. Parents halfheartedly send children to school, and remove them after two or three years. On the other hand, some Guarani leaders let American missionaries and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) educate their children in the 1960s. (SIL, also known

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as the Wycliffe Bible Translators, is a missionary group bent on translating the Bible in every language.) These individuals, once in a rush to abandon the language and culture that brought them suffering, now hold leadership positions because of their bi-lingual and bi-cultural experience.

Bilingual Education

Indigenous pressure and international aid pushed for change in the late 1980s. Bilingual education began in 1989 and the government initiated educational reform in 1995 that was funded by the World Bank. The new reform is built on popular participation and "multilingual interculturalism," but for whom?

The World Bank is interested in economic growth through primary education-standard neoliberalism without explicit interest in indigenous cultures. The State wants to avoid Peru-like revolts and form democratic citizens. Bolivia's elite has finally realized that these citizens are not

Hispanic (60% speaks one of 30 native languages). Indian movements push for bilingual education and equal opportunity; they demand the perceived benefits of education despite negative experiences of the past.

With bilingual education, the Guaraní demand schools and Guaraní teachers. "We used to fight with arms, now we will fight with education" stated leader Mateo Chumira. Meanwhile, the regional teachers union and local politics hinder progress for the Guaraní. Indians are accused of separatism, primitivism, and backwardness mainly because Spanish-speaking teachers think bilingual schools threaten their jobs. A decade later, bilingual education is nearly institutionalized. Implementation still faces many obstacles, one of which is the lack of Guaraní teachers.

Teacher Training

When bilingual education started, there were few Guaraní-speaking teachers. They had struggled through Spanish schools and showed it. They were not always proficient speakers of their language and many were conflicted by identity contradictions—they had studied to get out, not to go back. They reproduced the pedagogy of those who had taught them. Some even opposed Guaraní language education until it became clear that speaking Guaraní could get you a job.

Things are changing. There is a new teachers' school for the Guaraní and three other native nations of the region. The reformed pedagogy, still Western in nature, focuses on 'con-

structivism,' an ideal that opens space for indigenous modes and idioms of learning. Native language training fortifies linguistic ability in the mother-tongue, and Guaraní leaders lecture on history and culture. Debate continues about how to incorporate indigenous cosmovision in the curriculum. Textbooks in Guaraní include histories and culturally appropriate themes which is an improvement, but these materials are often superficial translations of Spanish texts. Educating Indians in Bolivia is still a power-laden inculcation of a new kind of state, one that includes modernization, development, and (now albeit multilingual-multicultural) citizen-making.

The Future

The Guaraní are experts at using what little the state offers to their advantage. Today, Guaraní education allows access to teaching jobs, defends Guaraní identity and language in public discourse (the first Guaraní Language Congress was held in 1997), and seeks the recovery of knowledge and the education of the ancestors. The Guaraní want dignity, leader Ángel Yandura stated "we don't want special education, we want to be equal." This equality in multicultural education may help build a new kind of state, citizen, cultural respect, and maybe even autonomy. Despite many contradictions, the process may be slowly beginning.

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Guaraní boys learning to gather honey by teaching each other

Reclaiming Native Education

Activism, Teaching and Leadership

by Nimachia Hernandez and Nicole Thornton

FOCUS

Reclaiming Native Education

The idea of 'indigenous' or 'native' education is over generalized and somewhat misleading because it is conceptualized by its opposing nature to Western or didactic models. It is important to recognize the diversity within indigenous education, as well as the similarities from a shared colonial legacy. While impossible to review all the literature on the effects of colonialism on indigenous education, similar policies have given rise to similar problems and strategies for all indigenous students and communities.

Policies of genocide, ethnocide, assimilation, incorporation, and their physical manifestations of removing aboriginal children from their homes have had a tremendous impact on traditional endogenous models of education. Nawang Phuntsog and Salomón Nahmad discuss the impacts of colonial education policies and provide a historical context for indigenous education in modern-day Tibet and Mexico. Amethyst First Rider presents insight into traditional Blackfoot education and comments on Blackfoot customs in education to holistically mold 'ideal' people steeped in spiritual and ritual knowledge.

In the last century and particularly in the last 30 years, there have been significant changes in attitudes and policies towards indigenous education. Relationships between indigenous nations and governments across the Americas also bear heavily on education and progress in native schooling. Differences in state and legal recognition of indigenous nations as sovereign peoples has a profound impact on who controls indigenous education, who directs or influences the process of how indigenous students are educated, and who advises and contributes to curricular content. Native peoples as individuals and communities are not relinquishing their centuries-old struggle against assimilation through schooling. To the contrary, new indigenous definitions of the role of schools embody their determination to incorporate native languages and cultures into school curricula. Indigenous peoples continue to seek ways to control their children's education by moving away from cultural and linguistic deficiency models to models that define, develop, and foster indigenous cultures and ideals.

Articles by Allan Burns, Margaret Freedson González and Elías Pérez Pérez, Cornel Pewewardy, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith discuss these basic issues and the role of indigenous educators as agents of change. Cornel Pewewardy argues that district, state, and tribal policies need to support the goals of indigenous education in the U.S., honor tribal sovereignty, and allow differences between indigenous schools. Linda Tuhiwai Smith illustrates how international charters recogniz-

ing indigenous languages and cultures have been instrumental in the support of bilingual and immersion programs on a nation-wide scale in New Zealand. Allan Burns, Salomón Nahmad, and Margaret Freedson González and Elías Pérez Pérez discuss the implications of state reform and state laws promoted, in large part, by indigenous teachers and how these reforms have contributed to curricular content inspired and originating from the local indigenous communities.

Education contributes to and promotes cultural preservation and change. Nawang Phuntsog declares that the preservation and promotion of Tibetan cultural identity should be a central objective in the education of Tibetan children. Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Antonio de la Torre López both discuss the positive contributions and expectations of education in the survival of the Maori, Tzeltal, and Tzotzil languages. Antonio de la Torre López also describes the anxiety of Maya writers when he questioned "why should we publish in our mother language if there were no readers?" The solution lied in the development of a non-formal community school to ensure a readership and another generation fluent in and proud of their native language and cultural heritage.

In as much as education can foster cultural pride, it can ameliorate cultural conflicts in education and the marginalization native students face in a Western paradigm of schooling. Most public schools in North America, for example, reflect a Western value system and are commonly viewed as natural extensions of the home. However, they disrupt the continuity of the indigenous students' world. Native students undergo forced encounters with at least two very different and usually conflicting views of the world in which they live, often resulting in difficult and traumatic cultural and linguistic conflicts.

Many of the articles openly discuss problems of educating indigenous students in the skills and knowledge necessary for academic, professional, and economic success without compromising the schools' role as promoters of native culture and traditional values. Guillermina Herrera Peña and Jorge Manuel Raymundo illustrate how programs at Rafael Landívar University prepare indigenous professionals to work in social services in a relevant manner that does not adversely affect their cultural heritage. Pewewardy and Lea Whitford illustrate how indigenous models or schools can work for both indigenous and non-indigenous students.

Beyond the issues of content and cultural preservation are the more fundamental and insidious issues of pedagogy. Indigenous constructions of reality and their accompanying

epistemologies contrast dramatically with those of Western cultures. Improved understanding of indigenous epistemology is important since the conflicting underlying philosophies that exist in every subject area at every level of native peoples' schooling experiences become obvious. Traditional indigenous beliefs, values, pedagogies, methodologies, and epistemologies form perspectives about schooling that exemplify native peoples' alternatives to Western religion, economic and political beliefs, and cultural values.

Cornel Pewewardy emphasizes the need for culturally responsive schools, holistic education, and the need to recognize "the organic, subconscious, subjective, intuitive, artistic, mythological, and spiritual dimensions of our lives." Manu Meyer also writes at the forefront of the 'epistemology revolution,' reminding readers that Western education in its scientific objectivity and empiricism has ignored that both experience and knowledge are culturally dependent. She argues that the contributions of sensual and spiritual knowledge are included in 'ways of knowing' in the Hawaiian context.

Indeed, the progress made in indigenous education has gained increasing momentum over the last 30 years. Pewewardy and others discuss indigenous movements since the 1960s and indigenous demands for change. This issue shows those that have manifested in the rise of Native Studies programs at universities across the U.S., organizations developed specifically by Aboriginal peoples to address the educational needs of the community, the proliferation of courses in Maya languages and culture at universities and teacher training colleges, and non-formal community schools.

Efforts towards self-determination in native communities need to expand to include community responsibility for indigenous education and the promotion of strategies for its sustainable development and self-sufficiency. Case studies in this issue expound on the role of indigenous leaders and mentors in the promotion of indigenous students as future leaders, professionals, and academics. Roberta Sykes offers an account of the Black Women's Action in Education Foundation and how the development of this funding and support system has promoted the growing cohort of indigenous scholars and leaders in Australia. Further, she argues that role models and advanced aboriginal students provide younger generations with enough encouragement and support to realize their academic and professional aspirations. Deirdre Ann Almeida documents the development of the Native Studies program at UMass Amherst and how her courses exploring indigenous education empowered indigenous students in the program.

What still needs to be done? Institutions must develop curricula that addresses relevant issues for indigenous communities. Educators must change the dominant pedagogy to one that recognizes native peoples' knowledge and inherent worth in order to gain understanding and respect for Native American belief systems and to improve the educational experiences of Native American students. Researchers must look beyond dichotomous classroom vs. community distinctions. Alternative and conventional conceptions of education must be investigated so that the literature is not simply about the failure of indigenous peoples in schools, or about schools' failure to serve the purposes of native education.

Mainstream school's strong Western cultural base exacerbates and enhances differences in culture rather than mitigating them. Changes can be made to make them places where indigenous people can be academically successful while allowing them to build upon and maintain their cultural identity. Since native peoples still retain many of their core traditional values and institutions, schools need to value their role in native-controlled education. While native and non-native specialists (some represented in this issue) continue to shape indigenous education, moving forward demands that non-native educators and researchers clearly identify their role in this process.

Educational advancement for indigenous peoples ultimately rests on how they define success. Native people will then be able to decide whether they would like academic achievement to be in conjunction with their cultural assimilation or whether they would like educational institutions to value their cultural differences. While educational literature on indigenous culture and schools is barely scratching the surface, this issue of *Cultural Survival Quarterly* is a start.

Nimachia Hernandez is a Nahua and Blackfoot Native American. She is also a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education working in issues of Blackfoot epistemology. She currently teaches in Lethbridge, Alberta.

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Acknowledgments This issue would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Harvard University Native American Program, and in particular the efforts of Nimachia Hernandez, Timothy Begay, and Eileen Egan. Further we would like to thank the staff and faculty at HIID and HGSE, and Sofia Flynn.

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Contexts and Challenges of Educating Tibetan Children in the Diaspora

by Nawang Phuntsog

FOCUS

Reclaiming Native Education

The 1950s was rightly called the 'Decade of the Uprooted' as more than 40 million refugees sought asylum in many different parts of the world. Perhaps one of the greatest paradoxes of this century is that this unprecedented event occurred in an era when human civilization was supposed to have made unparalleled strides in affirming human rights, self-determination, equality, and justice for all. Living today in a society that exalts self-absorbed attitudes, there is a growing trend to view the refugee problem as that of 'the others.' Yet the fact remains that so long as there are oppressed people in any part of the world the specter of dehumanization haunts us.

In a 1959 report called *We Strangers and Afraid* published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to mark the World Refugee Year, a short paragraph describes the conditions of Tibetan refugees fleeing from Tibet in 1958. Pointing to Tibet as one of the "quite unexpected places" of refugee problems, the report indicated that there were about 10,000 Tibetan men, women, and children who had fled Tibet. That exodus seemed to have no foreseeable destination as thousands of Tibetans continue to strive for physical, spiritual, and emotional survival on alien soil. Four decades later, Tibetans are still in perennial search for a home away from their homeland, expecting that someday, they may return to Tibet. The marginalization of Tibetans as indigenous inhabitants in their own homeland is the most pernicious blow to the psychology of Tibetan people. Herein lies the rude irony that the indigenous people assume a subordinate, second-class status in their own native land invaded by external forces. If Tibet was not occupied by the Chinese, Tibetans will not be labeled indigenous, nor would their culture face the possibility of extinction.

While doing research for this paper, I found the near absence of literature on indigenous education, much less Tibetan schooling, frustrating and discouraging, yet the process was revealing and instructive because I realized the dominance of Western ideologies in educational literature is as conspicuous

and pervasive as the invisibility of non-Western systems.

The exclusion and invalidation of non-Western educational thoughts and practices in the educational discourse is indeed a major part of the problem contributing to the invisibility of research studies on indigenous education. Even

when scholars attempt to investigate non-Western educational practices, they tend to view them through a lens that not only colors their perception, but fails to appreciate the colorful hues of the indigenous educational spectrum as viable options. An interesting study by political scientist Franz Michael, uses the typological approach of Max Weber to study the role of Tibetan Buddhism in society and state. His primary aim was

to analyze the extent to which the Tibetan Buddhist polity fit into the Weber's typology of bureaucracy. The main bone of contention for this kind of approach is the serious flaw with the assumption that the indigenous people are 'objects' of study rather than 'subjects' with the ability to enrich our understanding of the world. This misperception then leads to the misrepresentation of indigenous cultures as strange customs that must be transformed or shed off like snake skin to be relegated to a zone of obscurity.

Closely related to the pervasiveness of Western-centric educational thoughts is the ubiquity of the perception of schooling as the only viable way of transmitting knowledge to children. An attitude of apathy toward indigenous education seems to pervade among educators when discussions center around its educational relevance, and perhaps this attitude is reflected even more in mainstream journals that are conspicuous for lack of articles on this subject. A serious part of the problem stems from the fact that educators who frame present day academic discourses have mostly been socialized into associating and equating schooling practices as the most discernible ways of offering formal education. This narrow perception of schooling practices hinders one's ability to view alternative indigenous systems as a viable way of educating children.



Students entering the Tibetan school in Katsel, Tibet.

Tibetan School Project Update: Interview with Yeshey D. Palsang

Our aim is to educate Tibetan elementary students in reading math and science and in their native language and culture. The project also provides basic medical care to the children and their families, reduces malnutrition, and energizes villages to improve their lives.

The school is about two hours northeast of Lhasa in the village of Katsel and has grown over the past year to feed 400 children and educate about 250, and includes four dormitory buildings, a large eight room school house, kitchen, dining room, washrooms, and teachers quarters. In addition there is a medical dispensary, a new water-tank for running and hot water, a greenhouse for growing vegetables throughout most of the year, and a 'yak house' and pigs to provide food for the school. A new sports field and a library complete the campus. The staff has increased to 20 and many of the teachers have been trained at Lhasa University. Three of the current teachers are originally from Katsel and have returned with the expanding opportunities the school has provided. The villagers have built a Tibetan wall enclosing the campus and 8,000 trees have been planted to protect and enrich the area as well as to extend environmental education, in keeping with indigenous philosophy, to the children, teachers, and the whole village.

Currently the project also sponsors a program for street kids in Lhasa which provides food, continuing education, and handicraft workshops.

The Future

Recognizing that the Katsel School has been successful, the next step is underway to provide assistance to 108 other small village schools in the region. Moreover in Katsel, there are plans to increase the quality and capacity of the local high school and vocational training facilities for children who graduate the primary school.

Monastic Education: A Brief Historical Overview

One of the most serious casualties of the Chinese occupation of Tibet is undoubtedly the decimation of monastic education, the historically indigenous way of educating Tibetan children. A large number of Tibetan children continue to receive their instruction in monastic institutions in exile.

Tibet has a long history of monastic education beginning in the 7th century when Indian Buddhist culture was introduced into the land. It is important to point out that Tibet's culture and language were deliberately transplanted from India and not from China. The early Tibetan kings and ministers seemed to have evinced an unflinching determination to spread Buddhist tradition far and wide in Tibet. It is not very difficult to gauge what a monastic education might have been like when one investigates ancient Indian Buddhist education as Radha Mookerji writes:

"Buddhist education and learning are centered around monasteries. The Buddhist world did not offer any educational opportunities apart from or independently of its monasteries. All education, sacred as well as secular, was in the hands of the monks. They had the monopoly and the leisure to impart it."

However, it this does not mean that the monasteries zealously controlled and guarded its access to the public. It was indeed truly universal and one could enter a monastic education at any time in one's life. More than a belief system, Buddhist culture was "an educational system developed to cultivate an individual's moral, psychological, and intellectual perfection in the context of an unlimited horizon of human potential." Unlike medieval England, monastic education in Tibet did not encourage seclusion, rather it was an alternative form of education with a unique community living focus.

Prior to the Chinese invasion, monastic education was the major factor in the extension of literacy throughout Tibet. Monasteries and nunneries were easily accessible to all sections of the population regardless of their social class. Some scholars therefore believe that Tibet had an extraordinarily high literacy rate.

Monastery education not only served religious, but also the secular ends by preparing monks for the civil services and providing instructions in finance, arithmetic, management, and astrology. The ideal educated person is epitomized in a popular Tibetan saying, *Tam Yig Tsi Sum* that includes three important skills: the ability to engage in argumentative discourse, write masterfully, and analyze and interpret numerical data. Non-literate Tibetans were not deprived from being enculturated into Buddhism. Powerful non-formal ways of learning—story-telling, participation in religious festivals, classical operas, oral transmission of rites and rituals—played a vital role in socializing children into their culture. The unbreakable links between Tibetan culture and Buddhist education is indeed a historical experience of the Tibetan society. Carefully preserved in the monasteries, Tibetan Buddhist culture withstood the test of many thousands of years and only began to crumble in 1960s when the Chinese perpetrated cultural genocide following their invasion of Tibet.

A large number of monastic institutions have been rehabilitated in India, Bhutan, and Nepal where Tibetan children are provided the traditional instructions in Buddhist culture. English language, mathematics, and science are also a part of their program of studies. Monasteries have been successful in developing an educational prototype which allows the study of modern day subjects without undermining the significance of the tra-

ditional Tibetan Buddhist contents. For Tibetans, the process of modernization and the preservation of their cherished culture is not an either-or situation; rather they can coexist in a mutually beneficial manner. This aspect indicates the adaptability of Tibetan culture to the changing demands of the time.

Formal Tibetan Secular Education: Challenges & Prospects

The first formalized secular education for Tibetan children began in the early 1960s at a time when thousands of Tibetans crossed the Himalayas to escape from political turmoil crippling their free spirits. If the descent from the high mountains of Tibet to the lowlands of India was arduous, then the birth of a secular education in an alien soil was no less traumatic. Tibet had the dubious distinction of being a country that deliberately ignored its secular education for a very long time, only to be rudely awakened to its significance in the aftermath of being forced into exile in India.

From its humble beginnings in March, 1960, the first-ever formal Tibetan school started with 50 children at in Mussoorie, India. It has made remarkable progress today growing to be a gigantic enterprise with an enrollment of over 35,500 Tibetan children in 84 schools that include elementary, middle, and secondary levels in India, Nepal, and Bhutan. The rapid growth of Tibetan schools followed and coincided with a period in the early 1960s when educational systems across the world witnessed expansion unprecedented in history. However, the expansion of schooling in Tibet's case was more a result of the immediate need to provide a safe haven to thousands of children fleeing Tibet, rather than a planned approach as seen in the rest of the world.

Tibet's diaspora experience presents problems and challenges to the education of children. Nowhere is the dilemma more pronounced than in the espoused educational aims and goals for Tibetan children. Although cultural and linguistic preservation is a stated goal of Tibetan schools, the system-wide curriculum is based on the host country's centralized, examination-dominated system. For example, the educational goals of Tibetan schools strongly echo the common aspirations of the Tibetan people. The aims of Tibetan education are: "to impart the best modern education along with a deep and intimate understanding of rich cultural heritage of Tibet, and to cultivate a sense of national identity that will enable the children to share the hopes and aspirations of the Tibetan people to return someday to a free and independent Tibet." Hence Tibetan children face both the challenges of adapting in an alien country and of reclaiming their lost nation.

In recent years, Tibetan schools have come under heavy criticism. Nawang Dorjee, a Harvard-educated Tibetan educator, deplores the plunging educational standards and the absence of "dynamism, electricity, and the collective will that was

visible and palpable in the '60s and '70s in every Tibetan school. Dorjee also writes that the Council for Tibetan Education's "inept management, short-sighted policies and a host of other problems" have contributed to the deterioration of educational standards in Tibetan schools. Furthermore, he states that despite the improvement of facilities and qualifications of teachers, it is still "common knowledge that our schools are failing to give the right education to our children." It would be tragic if this trend toward educational deterioration continues without ever identifying the nature of the problem plaguing Tibetan education.

Time has now come for all exiled Tibetans to put aside their petty ideological differences and engage in a constructive dialogue to identify effective ways of educating children that enable an early return to their country. If it takes a village to educate one child, then the responsibility of preparing children for reclaiming their country is by no means easy. We need to find creative ways to promote and maintain the spirit and the hope of returning to our homeland. The preservation and promotion of cultural identity should be one of the primary objectives of schooling Tibetan children. The congruence of school curriculum and Tibetan culture is central to the process of ensuring the achievement of this goal.

Presently, the lack of literature is a serious problem thwarting the teachers' ability to help children develop a healthy cultural identity. Tibetan educators and scholars must work together to develop children's literature that are not only culturally responsive, but relevant to the lives of children. The challenge for educators is to ensure that Tibetan children have not only strong academic skills, but are Tibetans in their hearts and minds so that they will play a powerful role in reclaiming our lost nation. Education must then equip Tibetan children with academic excellence and cultural roots, both of which are crucial for the survival of Tibetan identity.

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The Educational and Cultural Implications of Maori Language Revitalization

by Linda Tuhiwai Smith

The Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and a number of other indigenous charter statements assert indigenous peoples' right to retain their own languages and cultures. For many indigenous communities, the major language issue has not been so much about retaining a language, but about recovering and revitalizing indigenous languages that have been systematically destroyed by a wide range of colonial policies and practices. In many cases, language revitalization projects have involved intense political activity, official recognition by legislation or legal precedent, intervention in schooling, support through broadcasting, and the production of resource materials. This has been particularly the case for the Maori language in New Zealand.

In the last two decades, considerable effort and support in New Zealand from both communities and government has revitalized the Maori language. There are now some quite comprehensive programs in schools, tertiary institutions, and communities with an estimated 76,000 children in New Zealand receiving some form of Maori language-based education. The early childhood 'language nests' or Kohanga Reo are Maori language immersion centers and the flagship of Maori language revitalization initiatives. They began in 1982 and have attracted international interest from many other indigenous communities. The centers cater to children for six months to six years old and began as Maori community initiatives after the idea was promulgated at a gathering of tribal elders. Although they are subject to government evaluation, the rapid growth of Kohanga Reo centers throughout New Zealand attests to their success.

Various other models of bilingual and immersion education programs have also been established at elementary and secondary school levels. Some schools known as Kura Kaupapa Maori teach entirely in the Maori language and are based on Maori philosophies and preferred pedagogies. While there are only about 56 government-funded Kura Kaupapa Maori schools, other programs vary from small single classroom bilingual units that offer some degree of Maori language to full immersion programs. Schools receive financial support depending on the degree of Maori being used in the classroom. These official programs are complemented by community-based Maori language programs,

adult programs, and advanced degrees in Maori. Funding for Maori language programs for radio, television, and other resource supports are also being put in place.

A revitalization project of this scope has had significant implications in training teachers, developing curricula, producing audio-visual resources, evaluating and assessing projects, and administering and managing Maori language education. These issues are the ones that are often planned for as they form the basis of educational systems and are subject to government policy, regulation, and resourcing. The education budget is highly contestable and advocates for Maori language education have applied constant pressure on the government to ensure that the future needs of Maori language programs are fully supported. Maori language issues are often placed in direct competition with issues related to science and technology which are often considered more significant.

However, language revitalization also has an impact on indigenous communities and on the new generation of indigenous language speakers who are for the most part children and young people. The cultural consequences of language revitalization are not always easy to predict, nor are they likely to be articulated in relation to language revitalization when such issues are also fused with others related to youth or the younger generation.

Educational Issues

Maori language programs in schools have been developed against a backdrop of wider government reform of the New Zealand education system. Maori parents want their children to be educationally successful on the same terms as other students in New Zealand, but they also want them to be successful within their own Maori language and culture. While official support for Maori language is now much more explicit, there are still enormous challenges ahead if language revitalization programs are to be successful. There is a serious shortage of qualified teachers who have been trained to teach through the medium of Maori language. At secondary levels, where specialist curriculum knowledge is also required, the shortage of teachers is particularly noticeable as secondary students in Maori immersion programs are not offered a comprehensive range of subjects. External examinations are not offered in Maori language, therefore,

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students may be taught in the Maori language and then evaluated in English.

Providing resource materials written in the Maori language has also presented ongoing problems for teachers and families. Presently, material is produced with the support of the government that include a series of school journals aimed at different age groups. Unfortunately, there is still very little material that supports the sciences, technology, or other specialist curriculum areas. Small publishing groups have also assisted in the production of resource material for their own communities. Although more materials are being published; the full range of curriculum support and recreational reading that children need to stimulate their minds and imaginations has not kept up with the demand. In terms of the perceived status and significance of Maori language, the lack of material emphasizes the greater significance of English.

Unlike other contexts, Maori is one language with dialect variations. This makes providing materials much easier than where there are several languages encompassing vast geographical areas and relatively uneven numbers of language speakers. A Maori Language Commission, headed by Professor Timoti Karetu, was established under official legislation and maintains an overview of the quality of Maori language material. Although the Commission is very small, funded by the government, and expected to work with other government ministries, its goal is to promote Maori in the community. At the same time, new vocabulary must be created to support the rapid expansion of curriculum knowledge. Professor Karetu has been adamant that Maori language education produce quality speakers of the language. He has spoken publicly about issues of quality and has insisted that all programs meet certain standards of oral and written Maori language.

School programs cater to children, but community language initiatives have also developed to help adults and parents learn the Maori language. Many of the adult programs are based on the principle of immersion however, there are other issues related to teaching adults their own language which are often about deep emotional matters rather than about teaching strategies. There is, for example, a sense of shame and inadequacy felt by many adults who were denied the opportunity to learn their own language. There are also issues of identity tangled up with language and the ability to function inside the culture. These concerns make adult language revitalization a challenging field of development.

Cultural Issues

It is exciting to witness the emergence of a new and young generation of Maori who can speak the Maori

language fluently and who have been educated in a Maori schooling environment. Alongside this phenomenon, today's young people are also better educated and have more work experience than previous generations. However, there are also negative implications for these Maori communities; values related to respect, especially for elders, can be opposed to values that promote the use of language in rituals, meetings, and basic social communication. For example, formal speeches are considered the elders' domain, but young adults who are fluent in the language also speak without being sensitive to the particular context. Often, parents who have politically struggled for Maori language can be excluded from debates about the language if they themselves do not speak Maori. This tension exists although it is often dealt with in pragmatic ways as young people are still considered too young to participate. Within the next five years however, this generation will be young parents and begin to take on leadership roles in their communities.

Currently, the younger generation of Maori are attracted by African American hip hop culture and other international-mostly American-cultural influences. The role models for indigenous youth are not always indigenous, nor are they positive models that reinforce indigenous language. Maori face the issue of making language revitalization appealing and relevant to adolescent youth. Frequently, the language is used as a way of defining traditional values and practices. Many young Maori find such definitions exclude them from participation in Maori society. Problems related to youth suicide, drug use, unemployment, and poverty are afflicting Maori communities. While many families find support in language and cultural programs, many others have become much too disconnected from their own indigenous roots.

Language, as other indigenous communities have found, is also about identity. The revitalization of Maori language is just one aspect of a much wider revitalization of Maori culture. The wider context of language and cultural revitalization involve Maori people in an enormous social and political project. The inter-connectedness of language, education, culture, and economics is something that indigenous people often struggle to sustain because it involves constant engagement with the majority culture. The pressure to do things 'right' under the gaze of a majority culture who do not necessarily support Maori language revitalization, creates an expectation that language revitalization is a straightforward educational exercise. The reality is that it is not.

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Our Children Can't Wait:

Recapturing the Essence of Indigenous Schools in the United States

by Cornel Pewewardy

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Reclaiming Native Education

"The only good Indian is a dead Indian" is an American aphorism uttered by General Phillip Sheridan during the Indian Campaigns of the 1860s and at one time considered a tenable solution to the so-called 'Indian Problem.' However, as its implementation proved to be economically unsound, other more reasonable and 'civilized' alternatives were considered.

Introduction

With so much attention being paid to the educational system in the media, national commissions, politics, and our everyday lives, it would be a distinct pity if we became so caught up in the rush toward excellence that we neglected to continue asking some very critical questions about what schools do. What is the relationship between education and the larger society? Who ultimately gains the most from the ways our schools, curriculum, and teaching practices within them, are organized? How can you build a political power structure in the design of indigenous schools? These are easy questions to ask, but difficult ones to answer.

'Our Children Can't Wait' signifies that if we, as indigenous populations in the United States, do not preserve our tribal cultures and languages, we will lose them through the homogenization process typical of the American schooling system. Ultimately, the real question is whether we have the will to make necessary changes for indigenous children.

Ethnic Specific Schools

Since 1990, a growing number of cities across the country have established ethnic specific schools. Schools that give primary attention to the needs of one specific ethnic or racial group have been introduced in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore, New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Memphis. These schools

are actively considering a new approach to educating students of color. While programs in these cities differ widely in their scope and approach, they were all established in response to the lack of academic success, cultural pride, and self-esteem that students of color develop in mainstream classrooms. These missing pieces have been cited by as the driving force behind disturbing dropout rates, low achievement, teenage pregnancy, homicide, and violent death among students of color.

Most indigenous schools were started by indigenous parents who sent their children to American public schools.

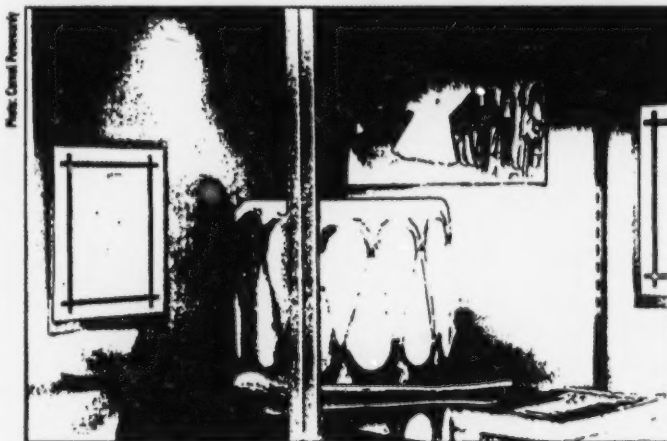
Over the years, these children began falling through the cracks of the school system. Out of this concern, grassroots movements were initiated by responsible indigenous parents, working together with public school districts toward improving the attendance and academic achievement of indigenous children. One of these strategies included establishing indigenous magnet schools in the public school system for

both indigenous and non-indigenous children.

History of Indigenous Schools

The history of American Indian education is older than the history of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The first treaty specifically calling for the federal government to educate indigenous children was signed in 1794. Throughout the 19th century, the government's goal was to fully assimilate Indian children into American society and to eradicate indigenous culture. Boarding schools were created and other educational policies adopted as part of this broader policy.

In the 1920s, however, attitudes began to shift toward a more favorable view of cultural pluralism throughout American society. These changes led to a dramatic turnaround in Indian policy. As part of this policy shift, the federal government introduced Indian history and culture, more



Donated by a Taos Pueblo Holyman, this drum at the Mounds Park All-Nations Magnet School represents the rhythm of indigenous people and serves to keep that rhythm going.

reliance on day schools instead of boarding schools, and other new educational measures.

Since the 1960s, the federal government has adopted a policy of Indian self-determination. This policy was applied in a new legislative framework for Indian education built by Congress in the 1970s by passing the Indian Education Act of 1972, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, and Title XI of the Education Amendments Act of 1978. The cornerstone of this framework has been the promotion of direct responsibility for the education of Indian children by tribes and other Indian groups. Following this objective, Indian groups have contracted many elementary and secondary schools formerly operated by the BIA.

Education for Extinction

Historically, the federal government's assimilation strategy removed indigenous children from their families to attend BIA boarding schools. When the federal government removed children from their families, entire generations lost access to native parenting models, culture, language, and traditional values. In reality, Indians were defeated not by military force (although this is widely believed), but by politically restructuring educational institutions to mold a colonial ethos. Colonialism that imprisons young minds with the concept of racial or ethnic inferiority is by far more tyrannical than brute force. Labeled 'pacification,' education developed by missions and the Indian service encouraged young Indian people to lose confidence in their own leaders and people and to view history and culture as second-rate. Christian missionaries working among American Indian nations were partners in genocide. Nevertheless, the missionaries were guilty of complicity in the destruction of indigenous cultures and tribal social structures. Ultimately, this form of colonialism chipped away at Indian cultures, making it more and more difficult for each succeeding generation to lead autonomous and pro-active lives.

The American Holocaust

Teaching from the Eurocentric perspective—that a few brave Europeans defeated millions of indigenous people—is highly inaccurate. Rather, diseases brought to this continent from Europe defeated indigenous peoples. Close to 100 million indigenous peoples were exterminated in what is referred to as 'The American Holocaust.'

The effect of this North American Holocaust on indigenous peoples, like that of the Jews, was millions of deaths. In fact, it was in a way, even more destructive since many indigenous peoples became extinct. The white man's superior technology, hunger for land, and ethnocentrism seemingly knew no bounds. The white threat to Indians came in many forms: smallpox, missionaries, Conestoga wagons, barbed

wire, and smoking locomotives. And in the end, it came in the form of schools.

Five centuries after contact with the outside world, many indigenous children are in desperate straits because of the immense difficulties that hinder their families and communities. These children will continue to dropout or 'pushout' until conditions within their communities improve and the non-indigenous world arrives at a better understanding of indigenous people.

The Impact of Eurocentric Schools

Marilyn James, a Sinixt (Arrow Lakes Band) from Omak Washington, writes:

"The cruelty used against indigenous children of past generations, a double-listed whammy of church and school, shows that those institutions were willing to travel to great lengths to 'take the Indian out of the Indian,' since earlier efforts to 'take the Indian out of the country' had been abandoned for a more 'civilized' way...not until the educational institutions begin to teach and embrace historical truth instead of the white historical perspective will the situation change for my people and all native people across the globe. The truth is that the white historical perspective was created as a bit of fiction that white folks could live and feel comfortable with, the same fiction being created on a daily basis now in regard to law, justice, racism, environment, and countless other aspects of our lives. The time of the comfort zone is passed. Changes must be brought home to bear fruit, or I fear for the future—a barren intellectual, cultural, and environmental wasteland."

This complete reorientation of European interest produced an extension of European civilization with its Western hemisphere heartland centered in the New World. Indigenous peoples realize the atrocities that have been committed against them far better than the greater society. Even today, in government, education, films, sports competitions, and society in general, indigenous peoples are presented in a derogatory fashion.

Culturally Responsive Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation

Culturally responsive teachers can focus on strengths that exist in indigenous families while using a culturally accepted group pedagogy to promote social cohesion. Tribal culture can be used to strengthen group ties. For many indigenous students, tribal identity is built through their participation in cultural activities such as intertribal pow wows, feasts, special events in school, and cultural gatherings.

Indigenous students have the highest dropout rate of any racial or ethnic group, almost twice that of white students. Although on standardized tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Program (ACT), indigenous student scores are improving slightly given the current trends, indigenous students will



Lakota singers and holy men giving a blessing to the new Mounds Park All-Nations Magnet School in St. Paul, Minnesota.

still lag substantially behind the forecasted scores for all students in the year 2000. The public education system's reliance on standardized achievement tests may have hurt indigenous students as they are culturally biased. Students whose English language background is non-existent or sub-standard may read and interpret tests incorrectly. In addition, indigenous cultural values that discourage competitive behaviors can also put students at a disadvantage.

For many years it was not possible for tribes to fund their own schools. That is changing today through gaming for many tribes. Casinos are transforming the way indigenous schools are being financed. Indeed, most American communities do not support their own schools but receive federal, state, county, and private financial assistance. To a certain degree, no school district in the U.S. has the financial freedom to determine either the process or the content of its education. The issue however, is not funding, it is providing the context in which the subject taught and the processes by which it is taught make sense to American Indians. Here, an individual is a tribal member all his or her life, consequently the tribe always has a central core constituency of people who represent its interest.

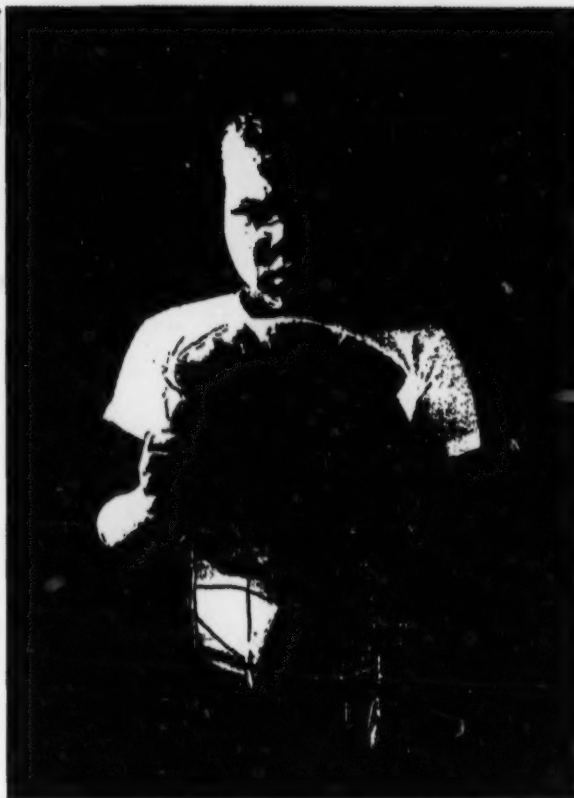
American Indians are starting to redefine Indian education as an internal Indian institution, an educational process

which moves within the Indian context and does not try to avoid or escape this context. Despite such relatively heavy investment in consolidating a viable model of colonialist education, and its statutory requirement that all American Indian children be subjected to indoctrination within that model's facilities, Congress proved itself unwilling to commit the financial resources necessary to truly universalize the education system in Indian country.

Culturally responsive teaching uses the child's culture to build a bridge to successful academic achievement. It places other cultures alongside middle class, mainstream macro-cultures at the center of the classroom instruction paradigm. For teachers of indigenous learners, being 'culturally responsive' means being sensitive, aware, and capable of employing cultural learning patterns, perspectives, family structure, multiple world views, and tribal languages in the teaching, learning, and mental ecology of the classroom.

Revolutionary New Indigenous Schools

The history of tribal control over Indian education began in this century with the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1960s. AIM viscerally and intellectually linked Indian control of education with tribal sovereignty. The



Student at Mounds Park holding a Medicine Wheel he made in class.

message struck a pan-Indian cord, uniting urban and reservation Indians to demand greater control over Indian education. At first, Indian activists created alternatives to the American public schools in the early 1970s in the form of urban Indian schools in Minnesota's Twin Cities. The Red School House was started in Saint Paul in 1970 and the Heart of the Earth School in 1972. Initially, these urban programs were remedial and operating funds were contingent upon year-to-year fund-raising initiatives.

In July 1966, Rough Rock Demonstration School on the Navajo Reservation at Chinle, Arizona came into being. It was a project predicated upon the premise that Navajo people are the ones best able to decide upon, most interested in being involved in, and the one group most vitally affected by the curriculum content and instructional methods used with Navajo children. Pine Point Experimental Community School in Ponsford, Minnesota evolved into kindergarten through 12th grade comprehensive school. Ramah High School in New Mexico was the first Indian-controlled high school of the late 20th century. The first BIA off-reservation boarding school to come under Indian control was the Pierre Indian School, renamed the Pierre Indian Learning Center. In 1975, tribes petitioned the BIA to assume control of the school and appointed a board member from each of the 15

tribes in North and South Dakota and Nebraska. A number of other former BIA schools in New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma followed suit.

Dr. Lloyd Elm started the Native American Magnet School in the Buffalo, New York Public School System in 1980. Buffalo was the first public school district in the country to designate a school a 'magnet' based on ethnicity. Minnesota followed suite in 1991 with the American Indian Magnet School in Saint Paul and Four Winds Magnet School in Minneapolis.

In the early 1990s, creative public school programs in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Washington, and New York started to strengthen indigenous cultural heritage. Thus, urban magnet schools offered an environment supportive of indigenous students and offered, for both indigenous and non-indigenous students, a holistic approach to teaching, tribal language preservation, and basic skills that was written or infused across the curriculum. Since most American Indian students attend public schools, it is critical that teachers in these educational systems become culturally responsive to the needs of indigenous learners.

Taking Back Indigenous Education

If we are to reform public education to meet the needs of indigenous learners, we must align all school system resources and programs rather than depend solely on special grant programs and indigenous-operated alternative schools. Public schools must assess the actual needs of indigenous students and organize the entire school program to meet these needs.

Indigenous communities throughout the U.S. confront similar problems toward integrating their local school curricula with content representing their local tribal groups. By using multicultural education goals and objectives, infusing indigenous content throughout the curriculum was possible. To connect generations together, an 'intergenerational' curriculum was necessary to bring youth and elders into the educational process.

Indigenous communities are now taking responsibility for their children's education and making their teachers culturally responsible in the classroom. Responses from citizens in Milwaukee, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Denver that have proposed creating their own indigenous magnet school is one possible solution. Another option is to create indigenous charter schools from President Clinton's charter school initiative. Whatever methods are chosen, indigenous peoples can no longer afford to respond with short-term reactions to a crisis. Long-term, highly developed formats that demand excellence from our youth are required.

Tribal sovereignty is meaningless unless indigenous peoples educate those of the next generation to take their places in tribal affairs. Indigenous education aims to eradicate the centuries of colonial ethos imprinted on the minds and souls of indigenous youth and replace that model with holistic models of pride, respect, compassion, and knowledge of tribalism.

National reports in Indian education like the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force Report of 1991 and White House Conference on Indian Education in 1992 offer many recommendations and solutions to the dilemma in Indian education today. Why are there still discussions concerning 'why indigenous children can't learn?' We know that cooperative learning works, both in elementary and secondary education

and can be used to overcome problems college students experience with courses like calculus and statistics. So why aren't American schools using it more often? It is my belief that one of the main reasons cooperative learning is not taken seriously in American schools is that most public schools espouse values based upon individualism, competition, and materialism. This is untraditional to indigenous educational values.

The Politics of Education as a Block to Pedagogy

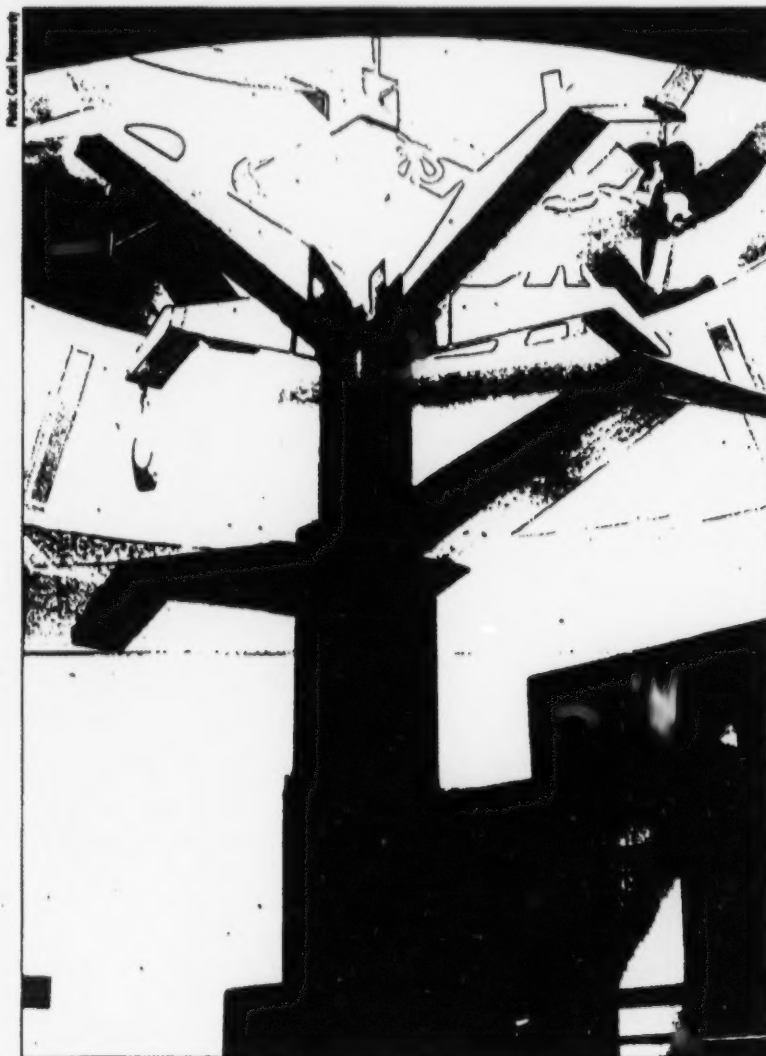
Politics have shaped indigenous schools far more than the pedagogy. Our inability to face political realities confounds the pedagogy. It is because of them that we do not realize excellence for children, even those who are thought to be advantaged. They are only successful by comparison to current notions of the white, Anglo-Saxon norm. It is empty achievement when the highest human values and spiritual levels are out of reach. There is a challenge for each of us to consider the broadest frame for thinking about our children.

Indigenous Schools for the 21st Century

Transformational indigenous schools for the 21st century must be holistic. Holistic educators recognize that all aspects of human life are fundamentally interconnected. Educational leadership must contend that brain-based education focuses on the physical, emotional, social, esthetic, creative, and spiritual qualities of every person, as well as traditionally emphasized intellectual and vocational skills. To be well-educated in the modern industrial world means to be well disciplined; it is to be alienated from one's own spontaneous, creative, self-actualizing impulses. Holistic education calls for a new recognition of the organic, subconscious, subjective, intuitive, artistic, mythological, and spiritual dimensions of our lives.

Staying the Course

For a true awakening of indigenous schools in the United States, we must return to the central goal of self-determination. To recapture the essence of indigenous education, transformational schools must become a model of thoughtful and moral discourse



This sculpture at the Mounds Park All-Nations Magnet School was commissioned by a native artist and depicts a tree whose roots form the roots of the new school.

which is multiracial as well as multicultural. It does so by building and operating the three-dimensional framework. The first side is the covenant, the agreed-upon principles of teaching and learning that the tribal school community pledges to promote. The second side is the charter or the agreed-upon and explicitly tribal sovereign governmental process by which tribal school community members acquire genuine power in making educational decisions. The third side is the critical-study process by which the tribal school community gathers information and studies itself as it strives to achieve learning priorities.

District, state, and tribal policies must change to support the primary goals of indigenous education in the U.S., honor tribal sovereignty, and respect the developmental differences of indigenous schools. Such policies must not mandate uniformity and procedures rather, they must view fairness as enabling equality of accomplishment, not sameness of educational treatment. Policies must invite the school to move beyond existing regulations and use a site-based covenant, charter, and critical-study process to craft a unique and powerful educational tribal environment. If indigenous schools are forced to stay within the givens of U.S. constitutional law, equity, multicultural content, attention to research, progress toward achievement of learning goals, and public disclosure of results, then they should be actively encouraged to be as creative and imaginative as possible.

The Task Before Us

Recapturing the essence of indigenous schools in the United States is a tremendously challenging, yet serious matter. All of the restructuring in the world will be of no benefit to children if the philosophy, theory, assumptions, and definitions are flawed or invalid. Indigenous educators and parents know the problems and their causes. With our limited time and money we must now talk about solutions and their implementation into future indigenous schools. As you can see, I do not find this task to be the least bit daunting from a professional angle since I have been an active participant as principal and now as educational consultant, helping to start up many new indigenous schools around the country. Therefore, I know it can be done and with excellence.

Promising practices tell us that indigenous schools can work for both indigenous and non-indigenous children. We must reinforce the achievers in education. We must expose the bad practices that causes our children to fail. The reason behind this revolutionary movement toward full integration of indigenous schools is that our children can't wait for another generation to just think about recapturing our schools. Will we save our children? Will we allow them to be

given away? We will now be tested. It is time to go to work. We've come full circle.

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Teaching Tribal Histories from a Native Perspective

by Lea Whitford

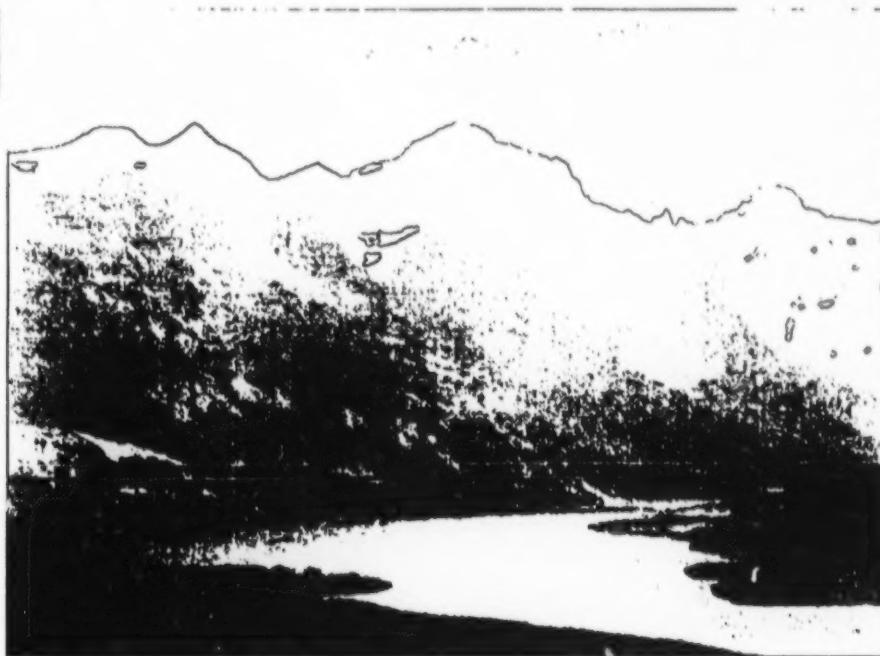
The obstacles and challenges that native teachers have to overcome are well worth the effort as cultural preservation and instilling a positive self-identity are immeasurable aspects of teaching. The rewards of teaching your own tribal histories or languages can have a profound effect on people. The audience, whether they are native or not, can be swept in the pages of history—written or oral. The validity of teaching courses specific to our own tribal history has been questioned by native people and non-native people; the debate continues on. However, this argument does nothing for what many native people want—cultural preservation and to continue teaching their own people the value of tribal knowledge for future existence.

As a teacher I have seen the positive effects of teaching native studies to native children and to non-native students. I have seen students make what I call a 'transformation' when they learn about their own tribal history, philosophy, or language. Awareness is brought to a higher level of thought for those non-native students learning about the native people they live among. Learning about tribal culture empowers students to become self-confident and fosters a positive self-identity. The growth from cultural knowledge can bring understanding for tribal adversity by embracing those things that make each tribal group unique.

The Blackfeet reservation which I call home is where the prairie meets the Rocky Mountains in northeastern Montana. At one time, the Blackfoot Confederacy was made up of the Kainah (English name Blood), the Pikuni (Piegan), and the Siksika (North Blackfoot) tribes. The territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy included southern Alberta, western Saskatchewan, and central Montana. As more people came to Blackfoot territory, more the land was in demand; treaties

and federal government policies reduced the tribal land holdings. Although the 49th parallel separates the Blackfeet (a name given to the Southern Piegan by the federal government) in Montana from their relatives in Canada, the Blackfoot Confederacy still maintains their tribal relationships.

The Blackfeet reservation sits next to Glacier National Park and borders the United States and Canadian boundary. There are numerous communities on the reservation and the town of Browning is the largest community. It serves as the center for our tribal government and as a shopping center for residents. The school system in Browning is the largest,



Glacier National Park borders the Blackfeet reservation.

serving approximately 2,500 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The general population are Indian (mostly Blackfeet) descendants. The school board and administration have recognized the unique background of the student population and have for a number of years offered Native American and Blackfeet study classes and support services in those areas for students and staff. Classes include Blackfeet Studies, Blackfeet Language, and Native American Arts and Crafts.

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Reclaiming Native Education

Educational Customs of the Blackfoot

by Amethyst First Rider

How do Plains Indians educate and inculcate the philosophy, customs, and values of their cultures? For the most part, education and socialization is achieved through example, actual experience, renewal ceremonies, storytelling, praise, reward, and recognition.

Children are greatly valued and considered gifts from the Creator. From the moment of birth, children are the objects of love and kindness from a large circle of relatives and friends. They are strictly trained, but in a sea of love and kindness. Children, as they grow, are given praise and recognition for achievements both by the extended family, and the tribe as a whole. Group recognition manifests itself in terms of public ceremonies performed for a child, give-aways in a child's honor, and songs created and sung in recognition of a child for good deeds and adherence to teachings.

A relative usually takes a young child 'under his or her wing' and assumes the responsibility of teaching the child everything about the culture and survival, continuously making progress reports to friends, relatives, and parents. These progress reports result in praise and recognition for the child. Children are seldom physically punished but are sternly lectured about the implications of wrongful and unacceptable behavior.

Storytelling is also a very important part of the educational process. It is through stories that customs and values are taught and made explicit to the young. For most North American Indian tribes, there are hundreds of stories about real life experiences, spirits, creation, customs and values. Stories are usually told by the loving grandmas and grandpas of the tribe, but not exclusively. Members of the extended family all generally play a role.

Given the opportunity, a culture attempts to mold its members into ideal personality types. The cultures of the Plains Indians are no exception to this rule. For Blackfoot, the ideal personality is one that shows strength both physically and spiritually. He or she is a person who is generous and shows kindness to all. He or she is a person who puts the groups' needs ahead of individual wants and desires. He or she is a person who, as a generalist, knows all the survival skills. With age and experience, he or she is a person that grows in wisdom. He or she is a person steeped in spiritual and ritual knowledge. He or she is a person who, in view of all these expectations, goes about his or her life and approaches 'all his relations' in a sea of friendship, an easygoing manner, humor, and good feelings. He or she is a person who attempts to suppress inner feelings, anger, and disagreement with the group. He or she is a person who is expected to display bravery, hardness, and strength against enemies and outsiders. He or she is a person who is adaptable and takes the world as it comes without complaint.

I have taught on the Blackfeet reservation both in the public school system and at the Blackfeet Community College. I have observed the sharing of tribal history in the form of storytelling and also traditional methods of teaching. When students comment about what they have learned from traditional forms of teaching they are aware of the unique abilities of our elders to pass on information essential to tribal survival. There exists a need for schools and institutions to allow elders or keepers of tribal knowledge to share their philosophies of native knowing. Those individuals taking on the responsibility of teaching native studies, tribal history, and languages often times are faced with skeptics and difficulties not encountered by other 'accepted' academic areas. Validating reasons for teaching native courses seems a never-ending task. Finding the support for such courses no doubt are causes for cultural conflict in some communities. These difficulties must be dealt with before actual teaching can take place.

Many families have a common background of grandparents and/or parents having unpleasant experiences in schools that did not tolerate cultural expression whether it was speaking their native language or taking part in tribal ceremonies. The first educational institutes' focus was not only to educate, but also to 'christianize' the Indians. The government had little or no regard for tribal traditions, thus leaving the tribal elders struggling to hand down tribal knowledge to their own children when the norm was punishment for being Indian.

The interruption of teaching tribal knowing by observation or by family oral histories has left a tremendous responsibility on the remaining elders who hold the tribal knowledge. Elders of the tribe feel an urgency to pass on information essential to tribal existence, fearing that once they are gone, what they know goes with them. We are fortunate today our schools have adopted a different approach to educating native people which recognizes and celebrates the differences of our culture.

Deciding how to balance the concerns of the cultural community and the interests of students is at times difficult. The students' innate curiosity to learn about spirituality can be uncomfortable for some. Respecting that there is a time and place for certain tribal teachings is important for teachers to recognize. Books can be a cosmetic approach to learning about tribal sacredness, however actual experience has its rightful place and only those given the right to transfer that knowledge should be allowed to do so. Our school district hosted a public forum, inviting the community to voice their concerns about the education of younger generations. This helped clarify what the teachers were doing and what the community wanted to see happen.



The prairie meets the Rocky Mountains on the Blackfeet reservation in northeastern Montana.

In the spring, the Blackfeet Community College has a week designated as 'Blackfeet Days.' This is a time when the community is invited to attend the lectures, discussions, and demonstrations hosted by the college. They may offer a course on tipi designs where an elder or someone with tribal knowledge will talk about the meanings of symbols and how tipi designs may have originated. A hide tanning class may take place where participants will be asked to bring a hide they wish to tan. The teacher may talk about tanning techniques, new and old. During the process of learning to hand tan a hide, the teacher may be telling tribal stories constituting traditional teaching. A more formal way of traditional teaching would be to sit with an elder who would light a smudge of sweet grass and say a prayer. The student may then ask more specific questions, it would then be up to the elder to answer the questions or inquiries. The best way to learn tribal knowledge is to listen-listening to elders when they are telling stories or when attending traditional ceremonies.

Getting students to think critically about their environment will take researching and developing teaching practices that can bring students to a higher level of thinking. Providing reading material on native issues, learning about their tribal governments and how they operate, researching and debating current tribal events or history are activities I

have encouraged in my classes. Students are asked to do family genealogies or to record stories family members have told. I have asked students to interview a grandparent or an older family member, getting the grandparent to tell a story about their past or things they remember that would be considered tribal history. One student commented "this is the first time me and my grandfather sat and visited-about anything." One student had her grandparent talk about a flood and what she could remember about it, "I did not realize the hardships my grandparents went through-I learned something about my grandma." These exercises have helped students learn more about their family back-

ground and it gives to them the sense of value oral history has in cultural preservation. In doing so, self-identity is enhanced and thus positive self-esteem is nurtured.

When I started teaching Native American Studies and Blackfeet Study classes, my own tribal knowledge was limited. I did not grow up in a traditional family that spoke our native language, nor did I have exposure to any traditional practices of my tribe. I did not allow this to stop me from embarking on a journey to learn about my tribal heritage and to share what I learned with others. I firmly believe learning is a lifelong process. The joy of learning about the Amskapi Pikuni has been very fulfilling, but is by no means complete.

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Acknowledgment

A special thank you is in order for my dear friend, Cheryl Tailfeathers, who has supported my endeavors.

Native Hawaiian Epistemology:

Exploring Hawaiian Views of Knowledge

by Manu Aluli Meyer

"Aloha is the intelligence with which we meet life."

- Olana A'i

The epistemology or 'philosophy of knowledge' revolution escalates. Sides are being drawn, published words are fortifying entrenchments, and academic armies are mobilizing. The 'traditionalists' defend a mono-empirical view of the world where empiricism is not culturally defined. Others work toward broadening the philosophy of knowledge to encompass the many distinct definitions of empiricism correlating to many distinct cultures. The largest dissent comes from indigenous peoples as we define ourselves through our values and the interpretation of our world via cosmology and epistemology. Battle casualties point to the elusive specter of power, influence, and politics, and as systems continually dismiss core beliefs of indigenous peoples, misunderstanding and antagonism grows. In some circles it has been labeled the 'crisis of reason,' but in my own native Hawaiian milieu, it has been called a 'window of opportunity.'

The Crisis of Reason: A Window of Opportunity

The specifics of a Hawaiian philosophy of knowledge focuses on indigenous identity. Because of the assimilationist practices of the U.S., asserting cultural identity continues to be misrepresented and misunderstood, fueling the epistemological war. Critiques of knowledge production influences all areas of study. The hermeneutic position (who creates textbooks and why) is tied to epistemology and has crept into all areas of learning that would otherwise have us believe in an acultural knowledge production center. The very definition of objectivity is in question.

It is an exciting time for indigenous people. This crisis of reason questions the building blocks of an objective and empirically based system that according to Damasio, separates the "thinking thing from the nonthinking body." The Hawaiian ideal of wisdom, on the other hand, refers to the *na'au*, the stomach region, the seat of emotion, feeling, heart, and intellect. The smoke has cleared away from science and revealed an insular group that has ignored the

facts, logic, metaphors, and stories necessary for completed human reasoning.

A Pandora's box of perspectives on, and definitions of reason, objectivity, and empiricism has been opened. Signs of entrenchment are escalating however, with verbal attacks, labeling the movement anti-intellectual, biased, emotional, feminist, and multicultural. It is somewhat ironic that these very terms have become the tools in which to deconstruct old paradigms or vocabulary, and engage in new structures of discourse that include fact, logic, metaphor, and stories.

Knowledge about feelings make empirical verification no less valuable. The crisis of reason is not so much a crisis for Hawaiians as a window of opportunity to re-assert our views of the world. The split between reason and experience, rationalism, and empiricism can be healed with cultural tools that re-claim these images in a more appropriate and Hawaiian light. Thus, identity is strengthened and culture is maintained.

The Hum-Drum Fact of Clashing Epistemologies

"Hawaiians, once masters of their honored crafts, poets and wits in their own language, gave way to generations discouraged and embarrassed in school systems designed by and for Western culture."

-M. K. Pukui, E. W. Haertig, and C. Lee

The colonial educational system in Hawai'i works very hard toward homogenization. It is not based on Hawaiian beliefs about knowledge, space, cosmology, time, and history, rather, education is rooted in the apolitical and acultural assumptions of oppression and power. It is not new to critique the colonial influence on our youth, yet we are beginning to sharpen the tools of discourse to engage in the discussion of how to educate our children. This has led to the very origins of what native Hawaiians value within our culture that is relevant to knowledge production, exchange, and continuity. What has come from this focus is the obvious fact that empiricism, itself, is culturally defined. However, Marshal Sahlins states "this does not mean that Hawaiians

"The colonial educational system in Hawai'i works very hard toward homogenization... education is rooted in the apolitical and acultural assumptions of oppression and power..."

are unempirical-let alone that they privilege the 'ideal' over the 'real'-but it does mean that they draw conclusions of their own from their empirical experiences."

Empiricism, the philosophical belief that all knowledge comes from our five senses, seems at first to be only missing a few more sensual cues. A closer look reveals the cultural nature of how these multiple senses get developed. In a Hawaiian sense, empiricism gets expanded with such notions as *akakū*, *moe 'uhane*, *'ulāleo* and many other cultural beliefs that shape a Hawaiian sense of being and learning in the world.

"To others who have not known fishers and planters it is impossible to convey even a hint of the quality of mind and sensory perception that characterizes the human being whose perpetual rapport with nature from infancy has been unbroken. The sky, sea, and earth, and all in and on them are alive with meaning indelibly impressed upon every fiber of the unconscious as well as the conscious psyche."

-Handy and Handy

All of life is alive and filled with meaning. Such is a Hawaiian sense. Fundamental to Hawaiian empiricism is the notion that experience is culturally defined by what Marshall Sahlins refers to as 'social canons of relevance.' He sees the relation culture has to the shaping of sensory knowledge and questions a universal set of empirical judgments, he sees that senses are culturally variable.

"People overestimate their objectivity because they are noticing only a fraction of the empirical characteristics of

things, a selective attention and evaluation that corresponds to an act of categorization. Not that we are not dealing simply with physiological sensations but with empirical judgments. The biological mechanisms of perception are not in question, nor is their universality. At issue, rather, is the organization of experience, including the training of the senses, according to social canons of relevance."

One 'ontological premise' of empiricism is the fact that the world to a Hawaiian is alive and filled with meaning and metaphor. Knowledge for Hawaiians had direct purpose-whether in developing a chant for a new baby, treating an illness, or forecasting rain. How one experiences the environment plays a huge role in how the world is understood and defined, and this experience is nursed and fed via cultural practices, beliefs and values.

"...the 'beliefs' of our people in Ka'ū arise out of sensory-emotional-mental experiences. They were conceptualized in terms of traditional heritage of interpretation and rationalization. But the commonly held foreign notion that these 'beliefs' represent nothing more than an intellectual accumulation of traditional 'superstitions' will be seen to be devoid of truth, [that] illustrate the fact that the 'belief' originates in some concrete and tangible complex or psychological sequence involving sensation-emotion-observation-interpretation-rationalization.

In a word, these are not 'beliefs' merely: they are records and interpretation of experiences.

-Handy and Pukui

And so, the 'interpretation of experience' is a critical idea and must be examined within a Hawaiian framework if one is to effectively explore how culture develops knowledge. The following example, written by *kumu hula* (hula teacher) Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahale, points to empiricism

Hawaiian Extra-Sensory Knowledge

see	<i>akakū</i>	vision; also a trance or reflection; vision where one is awake
see	<i>hihi'o</i>	vision; a dream just before sleep or just before awakening
hear	<i>'ulāleo</i>	supernatural voice or sound; sacred sound
smell	<i>honi paha'oha'o</i>	mysterious smell; smell that causes wonder
touch	<i>'ili 'ōuli</i>	skin signs:



ōkakaala
aki'aki
o'au
hu'ihu'i
ma'e'ele

goose bumps
little pinches, nibbles
ants crawling under the skin
sudden chill or numbness
foot asleep (omens of misfortune signs that supernatural spirits are present)

"Joy" courtesy of Meleanna Meyer

and how a Hawaiian view shapes the very core of sense and experience:

"The notion that a rock exists as an inanimate object, especially in its creative stages, is totally foreign to the Hawaiian. Rock, especially fresh lava flow, has a spirit, and with the assumption of a spirit, procreation is possible. Thus, this belief that Pele (the volcano deity) is magma, Pele is lava, and that she is the one who controls the outpouring of this energy is within this dualistic concept. Pele is the creative force whose name signifies the physical and the spiritual essence of newly formed land."

Rocks have spirit, magma is Pele. Thus outlines the directive for a Hawaiian's sense of the empirical. This sets the stage for the following conversation of signs, portents, knowledge, and insights gained from sensory and extra-sensory cues that are a basic part of Hawaiian life.

*"...hearing,
seeing, touching,
and smelling are
culturally
mediated acts
founded on
Hawaiian
practices and
beliefs."*

Expanding the Notion of Empiricism

Hawaiian empiricism includes experiences during waking and sleeping states and during moments of revelation or *hō'ike* or through the insights gained by environmental signs, *hō'ailona*. Mary Kawena Pukui, the lead author and historian of *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, a reference book for professionals who work

with native Hawaiians, defined five categories of these forms of communication and experience that reflect a broader list of sensory knowledge.

Thus, hearing, seeing, touching, and smelling are culturally mediated acts founded on Hawaiian practices and beliefs. If one views a past relative not as a ghost, but as someone to help and guide them through life's problems and hardships ('aumakua concept), then when this person shows up in a *hihi'o*, *akaka* or *'alaleo*, they will be welcomed and listened to. Such is the nature of ontological diversity. Hawaiians experience their world in fundamentally unique ways that reflect broader definitions of rationality in specific and timeless fashion.

The fact that observable phenomenon is mixed with supernatural ones is basic for Hawaiians and serves to explain our world. Visions play an important part in this discussion of epistemology because they challenge fundamental principles of empiricism both via the cultural-sensory argument and now, in a whole new way. They challenge the assumption that we learn only by observable sensory input and not in a more mystical phenomenological way.

What makes me smart in a Hawaiian cosmos depends on who's judging, what is the quality of my 'products,' and

how I exchange them. It is an intricate system that is richly moral and deeply spiritual. This article has scratched the surface of cultural empiricism and how it plays an important role in epistemology. It is time to step from the shadows to confirm and validate other ways of knowing that are more empowering, more meaningful, more fun, and more rigorous in the kinds of ways that engender community, extend culture, and strengthen commitment to the things and ways of value. Cultural epistemology is no longer a novelty, it is a fact, and the time has come to expose its suppression and non-reflection in our American educational system.

Manu Aluli Meyer teaches at the University of Hawai'i in Hilo. She is co-founder of a revolutionary educational movement based on sustainability and culture. She builds Hawaiian cultural sites in communities that ask for them and she shapes rocks for Makahiki competitions.

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Indigenous Rights and Schooling in Highland Chiapas

by Margaret Freedson González and Elías Pérez Pérez

"We want help for our people. Our children shouldn't just learn and abandon the way of life of our parents and grandparents. We want them to become intelligent but not to lose the knowledge and customs of our ancestors, our way of thinking, our way of talking. They must respect and learn the wisdom of our parents so that later, they are able to solve problems among their people. They must learn the way of life of the *mestizos* and that of their own people as well."

-Tzotzil mother, San Andrés Larrainzar, Chiapas

A New Educational Agenda

In February, 1996, representatives of the Mexican federal government and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) signed an Accord on Indigenous Rights and Culture in San Andrés Larrainzar, Chiapas. The Accord ratifies the right of indigenous peoples to an altogether new kind of education, one that is bilingual, intercultural, high quality, and free of charge. According to the text, the government commits to "promote, develop, and preserve indigenous language education, the teaching of indigenous language literacy, and assure the opportunity to learn Spanish." At the same time, it must guarantee an education that "respects and promotes indigenous knowledge, traditions, and forms of organization."

There has been little opposition to these demands at the level of public policy and discourse. Since 1990, the Mexican Constitution has established that the law must "protect and promote the development of indigenous languages, cultures, and ways of life." Mexico's General Directorate of Indigenous Education followed suit in 1994 by adopting instructional guidelines that reflect a shift away from the assimilationist 'transitional' bilingual education of the past, towards a language maintenance program model. Indigenous children are now to be taught in their native language as well as in Spanish throughout their primary school years.

The reality of schooling in most of Mexico's indigenous communities

however, is a world away from the ideal laid out in federal guidelines and the San Andrés Accords. This is particularly true in Chiapas, where indigenous children routinely abandon school after repeated failures and community dissatisfaction with teachers is widespread. During the last four years, we have spent hundreds of hours in rural classrooms and spoken with parents and elders in Tzotzil and Tzeltal Maya communities across the Chiapas Highlands. The following overview of government-sponsored schooling in the region draws from these experiences.

Background

Forty-five years ago, schools were virtually unknown in most Chiapas Highland villages. Today, government schools dot the countryside. Although many do not provide



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instruction beyond the fourth grade, nearly every Highland village has a school. Across the region, more than 72,000 Tzotzil and Tzeltal children are enrolled at the preschool and primary levels (See Table). Approximately 77% are taught by indigenous teachers within the state's Indigenous Bilingual Education system. The remaining children receive Spanish-only instruction from *ladino* or *mestizo* teachers in general state schools.

Linguistic and Cultural Rights in the Classroom

In practice, the educational programs offered by the Indigenous Bilingual and General State school systems are more similar than they are different. Both are characterized by a focus on universal curriculum objectives, textbook contents, and identity building accomplished through patriotic exercises that occupy a substantial portion of school time. Far from promoting indigenous knowledge, classroom practice is rooted in the encyclopedic tradition of Western schooling, oriented towards the memorization of terms and formulas that offer little preparation for the real life challenges Highland children are likely to face. Most indigenous teachers recognize the inappropriateness of this curriculum, but lack the skills, resources, or political will to generate alternatives.

Several Tzotzil parents explained to us how this lack of school support of local culture may stem from teachers' own educational histories:

"Many teachers, though they are indigenous, no longer know our customs because they were only with their parents for six years before they went to boarding schools and then to live in the city of San Cristóbal. They no longer saw how their parents lived, nor could they receive their parents' teachings. They cannot orient our children then because they do not know our way of life, how our thinking develops, how we speak in the community."

Language and literacy issues are no less problematic. Increasingly, first and second grade bilingual teachers use the Tzotzil and Tzeltal languages in their classroom talk to aid students' comprehension of the official curriculum. However, reading and writing are taught almost exclusively in Spanish, producing limited opportunities for the largely monolingual children to interact with written text. By the upper elementary grades, the use of indigenous languages has disappeared from the classroom altogether, save for the rare translation of a Spanish phrase or concept.

Inattention to indigenous language education is explained partly by the fact that many indigenous teachers, although native to Chiapas, speak a language not shared by their students.

This is the case for at least 35% of all Highland bilingual teachers. Many others feel unprepared to promote indigenous language literacy among their students since teachers themselves have limited reading and writing abilities in their native language. Finally, many oppose the use of native language instruction on ideological grounds. While indigenous languages remain firmly rooted in most communities, Spanish is the language of status, economic opportunity, and defense against exploitation by Highland *ladinos*. School children and parents who speak only their maternal language are often viewed as *atrasados* or backwards. Many teachers believe they can make up for children's language 'deficit' by using as much Spanish as possible in the classroom. As one Tzeltal teacher explained, "It's useless to speak to the children only in their native language. They'll finish primary school just half-knowing how to read and write in Spanish. School will not have been worthwhile for them at all."

So embedded is this belief system that some teachers view Mexico's recent efforts to promote native language literacy instruction as part of a government conspiracy to permanently exclude indigenous peoples from mestizo-dominated political and economic spheres. This helps to explain why new Tzotzil and Tzeltal language textbooks, which are central to bilingual education reform and available in most Highland classrooms, have been a resounding flop with teachers.

Ironically, the heavy Spanish-language focus of the curriculum is partly to blame for the limited learning that takes place in Highland classrooms. Children's literacy development, so important to parents, is made painfully slow and mechanical by the use of a language medium in which children have limited oral proficiency. Moreover, because Spanish is taught primarily through unstructured immersion and literacy rather than using methods specifically designed to promote second language acquisition, most children leave primary school with limited Spanish communication skills.

1994-1995 Preschool and Primary School Enrollments in 14 Highland Municipalities

	Indigenous Bilingual Education System	General State System	Total Enrollment
Preschool	8,390 (78.9%)	2,242 (21.1%)	10,632 (100%)
Primary School (Grades 1-6)	47,691 (76.5%)	14,643 (23.5%)	62,334 (100%)
Total System-wide Enrollment	56,081 (76.9%)	16,885 (23.1%)	72,966 (100%)

Office of Statistics, Chiapas Educational Services

A Promise Unfulfilled?

How do indigenous parents and elders evaluate government schools? Most are ambivalent. On the one hand, they believe that schooling can play an important role in preparing children for the demands of the world beyond the community. As one father explained:

"Now that there's a school here, our children can speak a few words of Spanish so that the mestizos can no longer trick us when we go to sell our products in San Cristóbal. The youth can look for work in the cities or on the roads and can speak with the mestizos. And wherever we go, we can read the bus routes and easily find our way. That's what school is for."

Yet parents recognize the negative impact of existing educational models on indigenous values and customs. Schools are blamed for making children less respectful of their elders, less interested in learning traditional knowledge and skills, and less willing to fulfill their domestic or agricultural responsibilities. Parents also see that schools often fail to deliver on their most basic promises. One former student captured the frustration of having spent so many years in primary school for so little return:

"When I was in school, my teacher told me 'Learn to read. Study your books well so that you can go off to find work as a driver or a doctor.' When I completed my studies, I didn't know much because what the teacher or the books had said didn't stay in my head. All I learned in school was to write my name and read a bit, but I don't understand very well and I don't speak Spanish, so I stay here working in the fields. What I learned in school was of little use since I couldn't find work. What the teacher told me was just a deceit."

With limited faith in teachers' commitment to local interests, many indigenous communities in Chiapas have expelled government teachers, bilingual or otherwise, and named 'community educators' from within to take charge of schools. This growing movement now involves more than 2000 educators across the state and is gaining strength in the Highlands.

Conclusions

Reform efforts aimed at improving Highland schools are underway. Indigenous teachers and community educators are being trained to make classroom instruction more dynamic, more participatory, and better aligned with the linguistic and cultural rights outlined in the San Andrés Accord. Ideally, such reforms should be community or teacher driven. In fact, most originate among indigenous professionals in Mexico City and thus have tended to lack grassroots support, especially from teachers. However, galvanized by the Zapatista movement, many Highland communities have begun to voice demands that coincide with both the major points of the Indigenous Rights Accord and with Mexico's

most progressive indigenous education policies. This dynamic is likely to increase pressure on schools to respond to local community interests.

There is a tendency in Mesoamerica towards increasing reliance on non-government organizations and the private sector to promote educational innovation. Many international donor agencies have shifted their primary focus away from state-sponsored reform projects whose dismal track record is well-known, towards more local, community-based initiatives. Many such efforts are described in this issue of *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. While these projects often provide the creative and political leadership necessary for educational change to take place, they cannot replace the government's role or responsibility in providing culturally relevant, quality educational services to indigenous children and youth on a large scale.

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Elias Pérez Pérez is an indigenous education specialist native to San Pedro Chenalhó, Chiapas. He currently conducts research with the Centro de Lenguas Artes y Literatura Indígena de Chiapas and trains bilingual teachers at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional's San Cristóbal campus.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the University of Arts and Sciences of Chiapas and the Rigoberta Menchu Foundation for supporting our ongoing research. We would also like express our great appreciation to the Highland teachers and parents who generously shared their time and opinions about indigenous education, and welcomed us into their communities and classrooms.

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Chanob Vun ta Batz'i K'op of Sna Jtz'ibajom:

An Alternative Education in Our Native Languages

by Antonio de la Torre López, translated by Bret Gustafson

Currently in Chiapas, issues of pluriculturalism and multilingualism have become more prominent than ever. In reality, there are many ways of thinking, expressing, and teaching in each of our different native cultures. In many cases, these differences contradict from those of the dominant culture which pressure the marginal indigenous cultures to homogenize and supposedly modernize behavior, cosmovision, knowledge, language, and forms of teaching, abruptly replacing traditional ways. Nonetheless, the accelerated changes of our era require an attitude of tolerance which allows us to speak freely in the languages of each culture; quite similar to the situation of *mestizo* Spanish speakers who must learn some variant of English. This modern world, with new ideas, inventions, and discoveries, often leaves traditional languages behind and tends to regard them as linguistically inferior with respect to the standard language officialized by the realms of science, society, culture, politics, and economics. Linguists and anthropologists working for the government have written books on rules of grammar and dictionaries in our languages and have used them to impose new religions or to 'Hispanicize' us, to integrate us into the so-called 'national culture.' Although we know all too well that 'national culture' is in fact pluricultural, multiethnic, and multilingual.

Our language weaves the words of daily life with a grammatical logic rooted in traditional ways and stemming from ancient ancestral roots. However, we encounter serious difficulties using our daily language when confronted with new Spanish.

As Tseltal and Tzotzil peoples of the Chiapas Highlands, we are the direct inheritants of the Maya culture which flourished for thousands of years in what is now southeastern Mexico and parts of Central America. All civil, military, and religious life of our culture is related to the stars, the passage of time, and the natural world, as well as the patron saints and deities of each present community. Today there is an

expansive corpus of oral literature and associations of Maya and Zoque writers. These writers have written and published (in their own language and Spanish) compilations which describe these ancestral sciences, the history of their peoples, the establishment of their churches, and their mythic histories. Many of these histories are rooted in ancient Maya traditions, similar to the *Book of Council* (*Pop Wuj* or *Popol Vuj*) of the Maya K'iche and the patron saints and deities of each community. Today, associations of Maya and Zoque writers and actors have drawn on the expansive corpus of oral literature to publish and illustrate their histories.

Despite these advances which have conserved much ancient knowledge transmitted through oral tradition, there

is still a strong need for education, especially in our native languages. The majority of municipalities within Maya and Zoque populations only have primary schools, many which function only to the third grade. These schools often call themselves bilingual, but in reality they teach only in Spanish. There are practically no boarding schools for students from isolated areas and there is only one secondary school in the



Students of Sna Jtz'ibajom learn to read and write their native language.

municipal seat, a long distance from many hamlets. There are no large accommodations for popular meetings, no libraries, open air theaters, or large shelters for cultural events. In the cities and urban areas where libraries, theaters, and cultural centers exist, millions and millions of pesos are spent to put on spectacles which have nothing to do with our indigenous cultures, nor are they authentically Mexican. There is a serious lack of entertainment alternatives and cultural activities, and a great need for cultural and technical training, especially for young people as they are gradually losing their identity, traditional clothing, mother language, and cultures.

In the Highlands of Chiapas, 15 years ago we founded Sna Jtz'ibajom, a group of Maya-Tseltal and Maya-Tzotzil interested in preserving and promoting ancestral culture through oral and written literature, puppet theater, live

theater based on histories, legends, and events of everyday life, radio programs in native languages, video, cartoons, native language soap operas, and audio cassettes reflecting the knowledge and condition of our culture. After publishing much literature, we realized that a crucial element was missing: Who would be able to read the books we were writing in our languages? Why should we publish in our mother language if there were no readers? Who could teach reading and writing and teach people to understand the narrations?

In January, 1987, with the aid of our literary coordinator, Robert M. Laughlin, we founded the community school. This school offered a six month course and was generally taught in the teachers' homes in Zinacantan, Chamula, and Tenejapa. As of December 1997, this school has awarded diplomas to over 2,000 men, women, and children now able to read and write in their mother tongue. The students commented "from the very first day that we

entered the classroom we were amazed to see that the Tzotzil language is very extensive and we felt good to be able to write it and read it."

When the classes were initially offered, the news that native language courses were

available spread like wildfire among the communities. Some were distrustful, thinking that once again it was some proselytizing religion, but when they realized there was no hidden agenda, they readily participated. One student commented:

"We formed groups of one teacher and ten students among both youth and adults with whom we worked in the afternoons and weekends over a period of six months. The course contained themes such as: the alphabet of our language, the relation between glottalized and non-glottalized words [the glottal stop serves to differentiate meanings and has a very important role in our languages]; also conjugations of transitive and intransitive verbs which have very different forms; the formation of sentences and paragraphs, always respecting the nature and form of expression in our language; and so on. We all enjoyed ourselves during the courses. In this way, we taught our people to read and write, until they were able to write a story, legend, or describe a dream. In addition to teaching reading and writing in our language, translating is taught because we have seen how necessary and important it is to facilitate the study of Spanish. Some of my students have won prizes in children's writing competitions with their own creations in Tzotzil. Later, more children and adults asked when there will be another competition so they can participate as well. I think our task is to help our people, because they want to learn to read and write their languages, to understand the writings of their fellow Maya and of other peoples, and why not? They could also be writers and teachers who share their knowledge and experience in their



Adults as well as children learn at Sna Jiz'ibajom.

communities and regions. Many of them have found new jobs and opportunities."

Our writings and literature must be mirrors and torches, the means of opening new roads for our peoples. They should be the light of hope for a 'New Indian Life' or *Nueva Vida India*. Through them we learn to open a new dialogue between our people and I believe we will continue to widen this interchange, to unify our thoughts and our words, always seeking the well-being and unity of all. Because our country is composed of many ethnic groups and different languages, we are a society of many cultures. Thus, we consider Spanish to be useful to us; it is necessary and important to learn it, to be able to share with, live among, and understand all of Mexican society.

We seek, in conclusion, the establishment of the rights proposed in the Constitutional Reform outlined by the COCOPA, the Committee of Peace and Reconciliation (Comité de Conciliación para la Paz), whose goal is to preserve and promote our cultures. From sections VI and VII of Article Four of the Constitutional Reform, we seek to "preserve and enrich their languages, knowledge, and all of the elements which make up their culture and identity; to acquire, operate, and administer their own means of communication" and more specifically in education, which proposes "the federal, state, and municipal educational authorities, in consultation with the indigenous peoples will define and develop educational programs with regional content, which recognize the cultural patrimony [of the indigenous people]."

Antonio de la Torre López is the President of Sna Jiz'ibajom, The House of the Writer, a cultural center of actors in Tzotzil, which groups actors and writers of Zinacantan, Chamula, Tenejapa, and other municipalities of the Chiapas Highlands, all of them bilingual Maya speakers of Tzotzil or Tzotzil.

Bret Gustafson is Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at Harvard University.

FOR MORE INFO

For more information on Sna Jiz'ibajom, contact: Sna Jiz'ibajom, A.P. 4, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, located at Calle Tonalá 3-A, tel/fax: 52- 967 8 3120.



Who Can Make a Difference? Everybody Can!

Sharing Information on Indigenous Educational Success- A Case Study from Australia

by Roberta Sykes

As recently as 15 years ago, combined political and social conditions had ensured that not one Australian Aboriginal gained a doctorate in any academic discipline. Until a referendum was passed in 1967 that enabled a constitutional alteration erasing their exclusion, Aborigines were not acknowledged as Australian citizens, had no access to mainstream social services, and had no enforceable right to vote or attend public schools. For many decades, tens of thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from their parents and communities and kept isolated in institutions run by whites; the girls were groomed for domestic service, boys for laborious work. The long silence about the effects of this latter government policy has only just been broken last year with the publication of a report, *Bringing Them Home*, published by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

In this oppressive environment, it was difficult, indeed impossible, for Aborigines to imagine a future in which they would play a positive role. Since the early 1970s, Aborigines experienced some success with community-control of services such as Aboriginal medical and legal services however, these facilities were created to fend off immediate crises; they were not products of empirical research and prioritization.

Pinpointing a Need

In 1984, I returned home to Australia having gained my doctorate from Harvard University. My presence at this university was a fluke; with little previous formal education, I had been invited to apply to their Education School at postgraduate level on the basis of my quite extensive publications. Primarily a black community activist employed in the area of health, over time I found that as a member of a minority group numbering less than half a million, explaining the interrelationship and complexities of our problems to the wider community of 18 million people was repetitious and tedious. Thus, I began to write and publish my insights and ideas so I would not have to continually repeat them. I

was surprised when this activity became the means by which I eventually entered the academic world.

During my studies, I felt it was a shame that I would be the first and only black person to have this wonderful educational opportunity, that this opportunity was available to me only outside my own country, and that it would be a shame on me if I was the last.

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In the early 1970s, I had been one of the four founders of a Black Women's Action Group which had sprung from recognizing the need for a community newspaper. During my absence, its activities lapsed, but since it already had some community recognition, it seemed a good vehicle to resurrect and tailor to meet new needs. The newspaper reached both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities which was essential because through it, we would have to locate appropriate resources and match them to the needs of potential Aboriginal scholars.

As I alone had been so fortunate to have had postgraduate experiences, I was morally obliged to fulfill a chain of Aboriginal successes and convey the possibility of success to other Aborigines. Going 'one-out,' or without the support of an organization to back us as we seek the appropriate place to utilize our skills, we would be like sitting ducks and our effectiveness would be minimized. But a solid core of Aboriginal graduates providing support for each other could be a very different matter.

During summer breaks from school, I resumed work at the New South Wales Health Department and sought out many of my old contacts. Educationally, we had major problems. A very high proportion of the adult Aboriginal population was illiterate and still burdened by the legacy of being excluded from schools in their youth. Although primary education was by this time compulsory, the negative attitudes of teachers, poverty-stricken living conditions, and inherited trauma took a very high toll. By the time Aboriginal students reached the secondary level of their education, their attrition rate was the highest of any group in the country. Only a handful of students made it into universities and there, few survived the vested interests

Mentoring and Reciprocity

Although my doctoral studies are coming to an end, I can feel overwhelmed by the pride of having been accepted into Harvard Law School. There was one moment I can pinpoint when my life turned in this direction. It was a comment made to me by a woman I have admired for her work to our community. Roberta Sykes had said to me: "So, when are you going to apply to Harvard?" She had encouraged me through all stages of the application and fund-raising processes and she has remained a valuable resource to me while I have been away from my family. Roberta anticipated the tough emotional and intellectual struggles that I have faced while I have been here.

My acceptance to Harvard, and the role Roberta played in that journey, is a lesson in the importance of mentoring in the education of Aboriginal children. Given the legacy of educational policies that denied Aboriginal children learning opportunities and directed them towards work as manual laborers, there are very few role models within the Aboriginal community (and still less of those success stories who actively support and encourage younger generations).

I noticed how the lack of role models can impede the visions the Aboriginal children have about their future when I went to a careers day at a local high school. When asked what they wanted to do with their lives, I was surprised how many Aboriginal children replied that they wanted to be policemen. When I asked what the attraction to that profession was, a number replied: "Because I'm interested in the law." When I asked why, then, not be a lawyer, I was met with the response "I never thought of that."

With very few indigenous lawyers trained in Australia, there is little chance of meeting one. The improvement of indigenous education means ensuring that the aspirations of the indigenous communities remain high - where they ought to be, not lowered by the oppression and discrimination of the past.

Larissa Behrendt is a SJD Student Harvard Law School



Larissa Behrendt with Roberta Sykes.

which maintained the assumed inferiority of Aboriginal intelligence.

The federal government had instigated an Aboriginal Overseas Study Awards program which had funded several cultural students such as dancers and numerous 'look-see-but do not come back qualified' tours that lasted between six weeks and six months. These tours enabled Aborigines to look at projects such as alcohol rehabilitation on Native American reservations and return to their communities with ideas, but without means to implement them.

Links in the Chain

Norma Ingram, a founder of the immensely successful Murawina Pre-School, an inner-city project for disadvantaged Aboriginal children, was at a crossroads in her life. Initially very apprehensive, Norma enrolled in a teacher's training course in a determined effort to pick up study skills and practice academic writing. By this time, our Black

"That we had to encourage her to go with minimal resources was a measure of the Aboriginal community's desperation and need for qualified people."

Women's Action Group had renewed contacts with a few dozen potential supporters across the country and when Norma received word of her acceptance into the Harvard Graduate School of Education, we prevailed upon all these members for financial contributions to enable her to realize her aspirations.

We were only partly successful in this fundraising venture and were forced to approach Australian Council of Churches-my major sponsor-to ask if they would underwrite Norma's expenses to satisfy the school's requirements. This allowed Norma to travel to Boston with a return ticket, a scant few thousand dollars, and a promise to send more as soon as we raised it.

It is a tribute to the fortitude and determination of Aboriginal people that Norma was prepared to undertake a journey to the other side of the world with funds to cover her expenses for only about six weeks and take on a course of study which would last an academic year at a university

"Our ideas were 'overly ambitious' because 'where, amongst the lazy shiftless Aborigines, would we find people who would persist and be able to survive, travel overseas, and knuckle down to work to form the links of our chain?'"

she had only recently heard about. That we had to encourage her to go with minimal resources was a measure of the Aboriginal community's desperation and need for qualified people. In 1985, Norma gained her master's degree and became our second graduate. Following hot on her heels, Mary Ann Bin-Sallik, a

Coordinator, Counselor, and Lecturer at the Aboriginal Task Force at the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Adelaide, earned her master's degree in education in 1986 and her doctorate in 1989.

In 1990, we sought recognition of our charitable status from the government to enable us to offer tax-deductions to local sponsors for their financial contributions to projects, and changed our name to Black Women's Action in Education Foundation (BWAEF).

When we first considered the idea of funding Aboriginal students to go to Harvard, we were met with strong opposition. 'Aborigines,' we were told, 'weren't ready.' Supposedly, our ideas were 'overly ambitious' because 'where, amongst the lazy shiftless Aborigines, would we find people who would persist and be able to survive, travel overseas, and knuckle down to work to form the links of our chain?' We used the cries of our critics to develop a policy. We continue to sponsor only what is considered 'over-ambitious' projects. Aspirants must produce evidence to show that they have applied for and been refused funding from all other possible sources and wherever possible, they must become involved in BWAEF's fundraising for their own project. On their return, they are expected to act as a mentor and raise funds that enable others to have their chance. Initially, the strident criticism of our ideas helped generate fervor amongst our supporters however, over time the Foundation's success has taken over that role.

Our Foundation has no office or staff, operates on a voluntary capacity and without government funds. After costs are deducted for producing and mailing our newsletters, (four or five each year) which keep members and sponsors informed of the needs and progress of our students and

potential students, all funds raised are for students' pursuit of their educational goals. Three years ago we instigated a fund-raising drive to establish a capital fund to finance students on the interest earned, instead of having to undertake fundraising frenzies whenever a student was lined up and ready to go. Although we have made steady progress towards this goal, we did not reach the halfway mark of AU\$250,000 at the end of our last financial year.

In addition to students the Foundation has sponsored at Harvard, BWAEF has successfully assisted

others to develop ambitious educational aspirations, locate funding sources, and prepare their applications and submission requirements. BWAEF has also facilitated or enabled students to pursue their dreams through a variety of other educational venues including Human Movement at the University of Oregon; Media Communications studies at Cambridge University in the UK; Arts at Alberta University; Music Presentation at the Berklee College of Music in Boston; as well as attendance at the 2nd International Indigenous Youth Conference in Darwin; the 4th International Indigenous Youth Conference in Sweden; and the International Confederation of Midwives 23rd Triennial Congress in Canada. We try to organize major functions to

generate publicity about our successful students upon their return to create similar desires within potential Aboriginal scholars, as well as to raise public awareness and funds.

Because BWAEF is flexible, we have been able to respond rapidly to various other crises and opportunities. For example, Aboriginal students abroad have learned of the death of an immediate

family member requiring them to fly home for the burial ceremony. Although these personal catastrophes are often covered by insurance, they require that the person first spend the money for the return trip before making a claim on the company to recover the cost, which of course, poor students are not in any position to do. In these cases, BWAEF is able to advance compassionate loans in emergencies.

Making a Difference

Although BWAEF is considered an educational foundation, it also plays a larger role in the survival of Aboriginal culture in Australia. Eddie (Koiki) Mabo was

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Black Women's Action in Education Foundation, contact BWAEF at P.O. Box 1784, Strawberry Hills, N.S.W. 2012, Australia. Phone/Fax 61-2-9699-1201.



BWAEF is considered an educational foundation, it also plays a larger role in the survival of Aboriginal culture in Australia.

responsible for the land-mark Australian High Court decision negating the myth of *terra nullius*, thus enabling Aboriginal people across the nation to make file land claims under residual Native Title. The name 'Mabo' has become synonymous with this particular court decision. When BWAEF learned that the welfare of Bonita Mabo, the widow of Eddie Mabo had been overlooked, the organization stepped in and set up a national speaking tour for Mrs. Mabo, enabling the public to hear of the man behind the landmark case from the one person who had spent her whole adult life walking beside him. Funds raised by the tour were used to erect a tombstone over this hero's resting place which was despicably defaced by racists the same night-much to the nation's shame.

It is however, through education that BWAEF has the most influence. Recognition that BWAEF sent top Aboriginal students overseas to study at prestigious universities galvanized some Australian institutions to

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major achievement!*

look at their own recruitment methods and the inappropriateness of some of their courses. Over the next few years, this new interest manifested itself in the graduation of a handful of Aborigines at post-graduate level, as well as the belated bestowal of honorary doctorates on a few Aborigines whose life work and major

public contribution had long gone unacknowledged. Also, BWAEF's graduates spread into areas where they exert their personal influence, where they stand tall as models of excellence, and their ability to articulate communities' needs and wishes commands respect.

The superb scholastic efforts undertaken by Aborigines through BWAEF programs are only half of the equation. Contributors and supporters that enable Aboriginal success constitute the other half. BWAEF has never had more than 500 members at any given time and many of its supporters are themselves pensioners and poor people whose contribution to projects never exceeds five dollars. Yet, when we send the word out that another potential Aboriginal success is waiting in the wings, devoid of funding that will give them the opportunity, everyone scrapes

the bottom of their purses and wallets and *presto*, like a miracle, we share another major achievement!

A few years ago, the government abandoned its Aboriginal Overseas Study Awards Program that enabled a few (10) Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders per year to study overseas. Currently, BWAEF finds itself virtually the only funding source specifically for Aboriginal students, vastly increasing the number of Aboriginal people who approach us for assistance. Also, because of more budget cuts for Aboriginal students at domestic institutions, more students are turning to us in desperation. In response, BWAEF has been forced to tighten its system of priorities, but continues to aim for the greatest degree of flexibility by maintaining a needs-based process based on the criteria we most admire: embracing the impossible aspiration and having the guts to pursue a dream.

Roberta Sykes is an author and educator. In 1984 she was awarded the highest human rights award, the Australian Human Rights Medal, for her life's work. Further information about most Members of BWAEF Executive can be found in her publication, Murawina: Australian Women of High Achievement (Smith & Taylor). Her latest work, Snake Cradle, the first part of her autobiographical trilogy, Snake Dreaming, won Best Non-fiction and Book of the Year 1997 from The Age (Melbourne, Victoria), an excerpt of which can be found on the Internet at www.theage.com.au.

Maya Education and Pan Maya Ideology in the Yucatán

by Allan Burns

FOCUS

Reclaiming Native Education

Bilingual and indigenous education in Mexico is often described as it affects primary schools and children. In 1995, indigenous teachers petitioned the University of the Yucatán to provide courses in bilingual pedagogy and in Maya culture. By doing this, they transformed their traditional roles from apologists for the state and agents of assimilation to activists of Maya identity. Newspapers and other media quickly moved to publicize these demands. Like the Zapatistas in Chiapas, the teachers found the press and other media willing to give ample space to discussing indigenous education. Political and cultural confidence have been strengthened as school teachers are able to talk to children about other Maya people living in Mexico and Guatemala.

The Maya demanded a new curriculum with a series of courses on linguistics at the heart. In 1996, representatives of 13 municipalities in the Yucatec-speaking zone came together and demanded the legalization of the Maya language in all government institutions, obligatory Maya education, and the creation of a teacher education school completely Maya. Bartolome Cime Dzib stated:

"We are the descendants of a great culture and we have no reason to feel shame when they say we are indigenous. On the contrary, we propose the formation of universities where the students can study the language and culture of the Maya...We demand that secondary and higher education be bilingual so that there would be a continuation of bilingual education through all levels. An indigenous school is urgently needed because bilingual education requires teachers with a solid professional education."

The University of Yucatán's immediate response under the direction of Dean, Silvia Peck Campo, was to initiate a strong curriculum in bilingual education with special emphasis on continuing education training for teachers working in the state. I taught one of these courses to a group of 24 primary and secondary teachers using Maya as the language of instruction. The teachers were all native Mayan speakers and part of a group of over 450 bilingual-bicultural teachers working in the state of Yucatán. According to the

National Institute of State Geography and Information (INEGI), 44% of the population in Yucatán speak Maya, whereas 39.1% of the population in Oaxaca speak indigenous languages, and 26.4% of the population in Chiapas are non-Spanish speakers. Outside of the city of Mérida, Maya is spoken by over 90% of the population and is generally



Indigenous Maya school teachers at the Autonomous University of the Yucatán.

accepted in everyday discourse.

The preservation of the Mayan language in the Yucatán to date owes much to the Caste War uprising from 1850 through the early 1900s, an uprising that successfully used Mayan as a political language for the independent Maya nation for 50 years. On the 150th anniversary of the Caste War, descendants of the original combatants wrote to the scholarly community celebrating the event.

"The official history hides the true historic events of the Caste War and has hidden the valiant nature of our people. In addition, a particular vision has been put into history books according to the interests of those who would talk of the Caste War in romantic terms, writing, for example, that the Maya could not win the war because they had to plant their milpas, that General Bravo captured the town of Santa

Cruz when there actually was never a battle, and to minimize the importance of the town by calling it 'little Santa Cruz' instead of 'The Great Town of Santa Cruz of the Jaguar House.'"

Centro de Cultural Maya Maakan Xook,
27 July 1997, (author's translation).

Bilingual-bicultural education became official in 1955 when the Dirección General de Educación Indígena was created within the Public Education Secretariat (SEP). Because this program was designed in Mexico City, far from villages in the Maya zone, it failed indigenous children. Through the 1980s, only about 20% of Maya children in the bilingual schools finished elementary school whereas 50% of students in the non-bilingual schools finished their schooling according to linguists Barbara Pfeiler and Anne Franks. Still, the critical mass of those who speak Mayan in different social class and cultural contexts has made Mayan an accepted part of education in the Yucatán. Assimilation and a move towards learning Spanish has always been the official, as well as the popular goal of bilingual programs in Yucatán, but this goal has come under attack because of ideological changes in education in Mexico, autonomous movements of indigenous people throughout the Americas, the Zapatista uprising, and Pan Maya ideology.

Three issues arose during the Mayan linguistics course, issues that are central to understanding how indigenous education interacts with Pan Maya identity. One was the importance of locally developed Maya literature; the second was the set of symbols teachers use to define Maya culture; and the third was a conflict over a Maya culture as a uniform or plural system in the Yucatán. These issues were embedded not just in the content of the course, but also in the way it was taught. The teachers wanted a course taught in the Mayan language rather than in Spanish to promote Mayan as a language of scholarship.

Maya people have always had a strong literary tradition and began writing in Spanish after the Maya glyph system was abandoned during the colonial era. Literature from the colonial period is still available in the Yucatán and many small towns have official scribes or *aj-ts'ib'o* who recopy prayers, incantations, and other literature in Maya for local use. The Caste War of the last century was also a war of words as the Maya Speaking Cross wrote strategies on paper, as well as gave verbal pronouncements.

When the school teachers began their new classes at the University, the first thing they did was to develop written materials in Maya and Spanish. The class I taught created a 60 page book written almost entirely in Maya: *To Converse in Maya and How to Work With Conversations or Bix u tsikbal ich Maya t'aan yetel bix u meya yetel*. An earlier course in this same series began the tradition of writing up the graduate

courses into books. That book, *Ejercicios Fundamentales de Gramática Maya* was discussed by one of the authors in an interview to the press:

"The Maya language, especially of the present day Maya of Yucatán, exists as a form of resistance to colonialism that continues today. The Maya language is a living cultural element in use. This is why it is difficult to talk of the extinction of the language as some linguists have falsely predicted."

These books in Maya are an important feature of Pan Maya ideology in the Yucatán in the same way that local publishing of Mayan pedagogical and literary texts characterize Pan Maya ideology in Guatemala and Chiapas as well as Yucatán. Books and writing are visible symbols of modern nations therefore, the teachers' interest in publishing is part of the development of Maya nationalism.

One of the first linguistic features of Mayan that the class remarked on was that the classes themselves were like 'Maya assemblies' when members of the community gather to discuss and resolve conflicts. At these assemblies, everyone talks at once and consensus is obtained through a respect for giving everyone a chance to talk. The class meetings were loud, multi-vocalic to an extreme, and quite different from the ordered world of a Western classroom. The participants felt a linguistic ease that was important because it allowed for open discussions of Maya symbols, as well as allowed for ideological conflicts to be voiced.

One of the symbols the teachers wanted to use was the Maya 260 day calendar. This was ironic because that calendar has been out of use in Yucatán for the past several centuries. One teacher brought in a page from an anthropology book which listed the calendar names in Yucatec Maya. Another brought in a hand-painted picture he made with symbols of the Maya day names. The reincorporation of the Maya calendar as an authentic artifact shows how Pan Maya perspectives are becoming part of indigenous education in the Yucatán. The calendar links contemporary Maya people with the civilizations of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica and Guatemalan Maya who still use the calendar today.

The university class provoked a process of conscious reflection upon what makes up Maya culture. This conscious reflection was prone to either an orthodox position, that there is one Maya culture, or a heterodox position, that there are many Maya cultures, in the Yucatán. Maya sociolinguistic strategies suggest that the heterodox model is most appropriate since the sifting of competing voices seems to categorize so much of Maya discourse. In the classroom, however, teachers were quick to assume orthodox positions. One example of this was seen in discussions about the writing system. In 1984, Yucatán adopted a standardized Spanish writing system for Maya. The system was created by linguists and includes replacing the colonial 'h' with the modern



Children in the towns and villages of the Yucatán are fluent in both Maya and Spanish

Spanish and simplifying glottalized consonants to a more phonetic form. While these orthographic conventions lessen written ambiguity, they are at odds with the older colonial spelling of place names and surnames that pervade the Yucatec cultural and geographic landscape, as almost all towns in Yucatán retain their Maya names. Many of the teachers felt strongly that the standardized writing system was important for literacy and cultural stability, while others argued that the orthography adopted by the state put parents and their children at odds regarding how to spell their own names and the names of their towns.

A second area where the difference between orthodox and heterodox positions was clearly marked involved gender roles in the Yucatán, especially as these roles related to well-known identity rituals like the rain ceremony or *ch'achak*. When one of the women teachers mentioned that women do participate in the *ch'achak* ceremonies, she was told that that was an aberration and the real Maya *ch'achak* ceremonies were only performed by men. What was interesting in terms of indigenous education was the assumption that authority for ritual behavior was becoming more and more defined as a male sphere of activity, but not without strong argument from women.

The introduction of conscious cultural models like Pan Maya ideology into indigenous education in the Yucatán occurs in very specific occasions such as these classes. By conducting the class in Maya, they were able to move the language from an object of study to the language of educational discourse. This was especially important for some of the less outgoing teachers who were not as skilled in Spanish as others. Maya as the language of instruction meant that they often had the upper hand over their more urban counterparts who were more used to carrying on pedagogical discussions in English. I, too,

came away from the class with a new understanding of how strong the Maya language is and how its use creates enthusiasm in education. The classes on Maya linguistics and culture taught at the University of the Yucatán over the past several years offer a window into the process of indigenous education among the Maya of Yucatán, especially as it becomes part of a larger Pan Maya ideology in Mexico, Guatemala, and the United States.

Allan Burns, an applied anthropologist from the University of Florida, is fluent in Spanish and Yucatec Maya. He has worked with the Autonomous University of the Yucatán for the past 15 years in their anthropology program, as well as international exchange office. His interest in Maya education includes working with Guatemalan refugees in the U.S. and with indigenous filmmakers and photographers in Chiapas. This article is based on work he does with Maya speaking elementary school teachers in Yucatán.

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Indigenous Legal Translators

Challenges of a University Program for the Maya of Guatemala

by Guillermina Herrera Peña translated by Nicole Thornton

Since 1995, Rafael Landívar University of Guatemala has offered a program for the professional training of indigenous legal translators to work in the courts within a project for the qualitative improvement of the justice system in Guatemala. The University program places emphasis not only on the legal and linguistic aspects of the curriculum, but on strengthening identity and students' commitment to their community. A vitally important component of the program that transcends well beyond teaching is the preparation of written judicial terminology and material in Maya and Spanish, and bilingual clinics in civil, penal, labor, and constitutional laws. Also of major relevance is the creation of public law offices where students come to understand legal practices within a cultural context serving the monolingual Maya-speaking population or those populations where Maya-Spanish bilingualism is limited. At present, the program operates on the two University campuses in areas populated mostly by Mayas. But in 1998, it will expand to the central campus, situated in Guatemala City. Likewise, the number of Mayan languages served will expand from five to eight and the number of scholarship students will increase from 300 to 370.

Correcting Past Mistakes

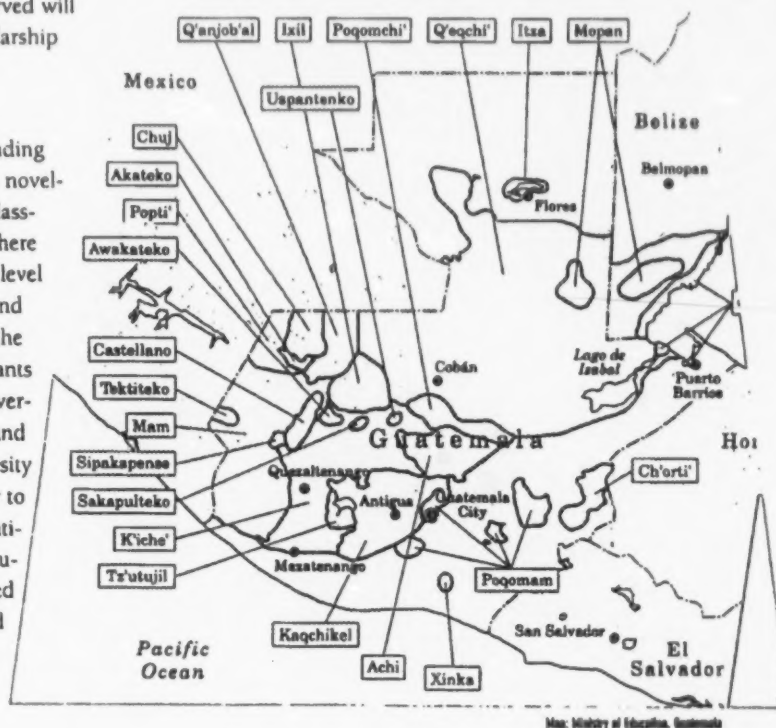
It is important to remember that Indians attending university in Guatemala is not a novelty, nor is it a novelty that they teach Mayan languages in university classrooms. From the first periods in the colonial era, there were indigenous people studying at the university level and during the 16th century, there were subjects and professorships in Mayan languages. Nevertheless, the focus was always to assimilate indigenous participants through university education. Indians that left university classrooms generally renounced their culture and language, and became 'ladinized.' However, university programs such as the one described here endeavor to form indigenous leaders strengthened in their identity, and inform and train them to serve their communities. They are open to the outside world, prepared to interact in a positive manner, and respectful and creative with others both in and outside their own culture. This university program emphasizes the reconciliation and revaluation with their own

ethnic being and allows students to appreciate, recognize, and grow from that which is different. Strengthening democratic process in these times of change in Guatemala, the importance of the indigenous 'intelligentsia' will without a doubt, shape the future nature of the Guatemalan state and nation.

In the same manner, indigenous languages in these programs are not merely objects of study, but also vehicles for transmitting knowledge and instruments of communication that have renewed importance and timeliness. Obviously, this focus is congruent with the growing indigenous movement of post-war Guatemala that justifies the strengthening of ethnicity, leaves ample space for the development of theories and policies of pluralism, and promotes and respects diversity and reconciliation.

Context

Not very long ago, it was believed that the development of the country and the strengthening of national unity would



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demand the cultural and linguistic uniformity of all Guatemalans. Further, it was believed that national unity would come to pass with the promotion of a 'national culture' in the Western tradition and the assimilation of indigenous languages into Spanish. With periods of greater or lesser following, this idea has been embodied in state actions of all types—from educational and cultural to welfare and judicial services in Guatemala.

The situation of Guatemalan Indians greatly compounds the suffering caused by these state actions, especially in the judicial systems. The fact that 23 languages are spoken in a territory of 108,800 sq. kilometers, high rates of indigenous monolingualism, insufficient knowledge of Spanish, extreme poverty almost across the board, and a lack of educational services—even in rudimentary literacy—maintain the indigenous population in a state of extreme vulnerability. This vulnerability is combined with a justice system that has ignored the multilingual and multicultural reality of the society to which it is due, is determined to make Spanish its exclusive vehicle of communication, uses the Hispanic and Western cultural tradition as its only parameter of judgment, and establishes that ignorance of the law is not an excuse for the lack of enforcement. With the promulgation of the new penal code and the Accord on the Rights and Identity of Indigenous Peoples (one of the Peace Agreements signed between the Government of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) in 1995) in 1992, the legal translator is seen as a necessary and an increasingly invaluable support for the administration of a justice system more congruent with the indigenous reality.

To guarantee the significance and contribution of the legal translator in the improvement of how justice is granted, it becomes indispensable to prepare him/her appropriately. Perhaps it is worthwhile to remember, in the manner of illustration and reinforcement, the well-known case of the ex-military commissioner Cándido Noriega. The people of Tuluché, a small village of the Department of Quiché were dramatically hit by the recently ended armed conflict and spent many months at the tribunals bringing serious accusations against Señor Noriega. These accusations concerned crimes that were constantly in violation of the community's human rights. Violations included murdering innocent people, raping women, stealing, abusing his power, and carrying out innumerable other misdemeanors during the tragic years of armed conflict. This case that was well-covered by the national and international press shows the Indians' level of vulnerability as they confront tribunals and clearly illustrates the necessity of and their reliance on suitably prepared translators.

In the above-mentioned case, neither the judge nor the tribunal spoke K'ichee, the language spoken by the indigenous women plaintiffs. Although there was a translator, his incompetence was such that he could not distinguish between dialects of K'ichee. In one particular case, when

translating the K'ichee word for 'grandfather,' the plaintiff interpreted this as 'hen' due to subtle differences between the K'ichee dialects. Therefore, when the plaintiff was asked if the defendant had killed her 'grandfather,' this was understood as her 'hen' and obviously, her response was negative. The results of this judgment were in favor of the defendant and even though the case has been appealed, the plaintiffs' experience was deplorable. In addition, many interpretation problems that occurred in this trial surpassed the linguistic question and may have required a cultural expert to contribute information to the tribunal.

Rafael Landívar University is a Guatemalan institution of higher education and was founded in 1961. Almost from its inception it has developed programs to promote the indigenous population. It has also worked to approach justice from research on indigenous communities' customary laws, protect communities through the public law offices, and teach or instruct through legal translators. In reality, this project emerged in 1987, in el Programa del Desarrollo Integral de la Población Maya or the Program for the Integral Development of the Maya Population, (PRODIPMA), financed by USAID. Thanks to this program, approximately 300 Maya have graduated from the University. In the initial stages, the career was officially labeled 'legal interpreter.' Unfortunately, it was not successful because the Guatemalan judicial system did not include legal translators in the judicial process. After the promulgation of the penal code which explicitly opens the door to the legal translator, the University reopened its academic program.

The Program

The curriculum is formed by content typical of the legal career, content that permits students to familiarize themselves with the discipline; formative content with special emphasis on ethical and cultural issues; and linguistic content that concentrates on the knowledge of both oral and written practices of the two languages—Maya and Spanish. Furthermore, the translators' career demands that students do practical work in the public law offices like providing translation services to Maya-speakers or those with limited Spanish, counseling and advising indigenous peoples to resolve their legal issues, in short, services they require as support for legal procedures. Outside the public law offices, students also gain experience in the courts, municipalities, and offices of the State. The students' involvement in the program is quite extensive as the University does not want them to simply acquire knowledge, but rather strengthen their leadership through an active learning experience. With this end, students also participate in the preparation and validation of educational materials.

The program is presently offered on two campuses of the Rafael Landívar University: La Verapaz in the capital city of Cobán, and Quetzaltenango, two areas largely populated

Advanced Maya Studies at Rafael Landívar University

by Jorge Manuel Raymundo translated by Nicole Thornton

Before studying for my bachelors in linguistics, I studied at Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala to design and write educational materials for rural areas. I was always supported with scholarships because economically I could not support myself and still attend University. In 1991, I started linguistics and finished in 1993. I never thought I would be able to enter a linguistics career because thousands and thousands of indigenous students like myself wanted to study at a university, but we did not have the opportunity.

While not many disciplines offered by the University are directed toward the Maya population, Rafael Landívar University has more opportunities than all the other universities in Guatemala combined. It offers different careers and tends to sensitize students to the reality of the country-towards an intercultural coexistence. This way, we come to understand the different cultures that exist in Guatemala.

My first experience in the University as a professional was in 1977-78 as a member of the technical team for the Training Center for Social Workers, but because of the violence during that time, I dedicated myself to teaching middle-level indigenous students. I then attended the University as a graduate student of linguistics. Currently, I am a Professor of Linguistics in the undergraduate linguistics program, writer, coordinator of projects, thesis advisor, and (very recently) researcher in the Institute of Linguistics.

From my experience, I believe that this university is the only one that truly responds to the demands and desires of indigenous students. The content and curriculum in general has changed its focus in the last few years. Every year there are more courses and greater content within courses dealing with the diverse cultures of Guatemala, particularly the Maya culture. Mayan language courses that were optional or electives, now form part of the curriculum in some professions and are formal, required courses. This is the first step in the demands of indigenous peoples in Guatemala and we place our hope and expectations in this University and not in any other.

There continue to be more indigenous professors in different careers on the central campus as well as campuses in regional capitals. There are still few indigenous people who belong to the Board of Directors of the University, but the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and a member of the Finance Office are indigenous-a start. We will struggle to gain more representation in the future.

I have participated in the legal translator program up until this year. I also involved myself in this field by participating as a consultant in a training program for translators and interpreters that MINAGUA (UN Mission to Ensure Guatemalan Human Rights) carried out in Quetzaltenango during 1996 and 1997. While I did not have much exposure to human rights issues at the university level, my interest in Guatemalan human rights grew and I began researching and contacting people in this field. With lawyers and scholars, I designed a training plan for interpreters. International agencies and judicial institutions will continue the project and the staff's training. Although I left the project to work at the University, I am always in contact with my colleagues and participate in other projects and training for specific trials.

In general I believe that the Maya population is very interested in participating in these programs even though there is skepticism about judicial systems and processes and fear that customary laws and elders' authority in each community will be undermined. I believe that we are starting to discuss and analyze our judicial systems in order to design new paths and forms of complying with the state systems without abandoning our own. A new educational program dedicated to indigenous professionals is being initiated through EDUMAYA, a program financed by USAID. This program has revealed a great interest in bilingual, intercultural education and will establish various teaching opportunities, careers, and faculty positions in this study at the undergraduate level. I believe that these new programs and careers should be evaluated, improved, and intensify in the study of Maya languages and culture in order to support the academic and judicial education that students receive. We need to avoid educating *abogados* or corrupt pseudo-lawyers that take advantage and exploit their fellow citizens through their experience and education. Sensitizing students to their own language and culture will help their people resolve their legal problems.

Rafael Landívar University has contributed to the academics, research, and social planning of indigenous communities in Guatemala. In conjunction with the Political Constitution of the Republic in 1985, Rafael Landívar University became a pioneer when it was the first to discuss and publish reports concerning the multicultural, plurilingual, and multiethnic nature of the state. As indigenous people, we would like to see the University continue to be more involved with us. It has made progress in the equality and respect for the different cultures that exist in Guatemala and we hope that it continues on this path and accompanies us in constructing a multi- and intercultural Guatemala.

Jorge Manuel Raymundo is Q'anjob'al Maya and a professor, writer, and researcher at the Institute of Linguistics, Rafael Landívar University, Guatemala

by Mayas. In La Verapaz, the program is offered in Spanish and three Mayan languages: Achi, 'Q'eqchi,' and Poqomchi.' In las Facultades de Quetzaltenango, the program is offered in Spanish and two Mayan languages: K'ichee' and Mam.

The methodology utilized by the University is characterized as 'semi-residential,' the students come together on campus Friday afternoons and Saturdays in order to meet with their professors. During the rest of the week, they study in their communities with materials specifically prepared for that community. Towards the end of the program, they work a certain number of cases in the public law offices and other centers of legal practice.

Support of the Program: Scholarships and Materials

The students of the program are Maya Indians coming from the above-mentioned communities—K'ichee,' Mam, Achi,' Q'eqchi,' and Poqomchi. Their economic situation is extremely precarious. Many travel to the University campus from remote communities, traveling terrible roads and spending the night in the city because they cannot return home until the following day. This situation has obligated the University to find financing to support them. Presently, 300 students receive scholarships through MISEREOR, a Catholic German organization, that finances not only their studies, but also supports the students with books, materials, and per diem expenses.

The program has also had to prepare educational materials, legal terminologies, and university texts in those Mayan languages that it services—languages in which such legal materials were almost non-existent. Today, thanks to the program, bilingual legal terminologies have been prepared, an extremely complex job in itself that has required multiple local consultants.

Problems and Challenges

The program has encountered a few problems that have affected its development. There are few teachers fluent in Mayan languages and knowledgeable of the current Maya culture. It is important to point out that there is no tradition in University institutions for training translators and even less in the development of university courses in Mayan languages, especially when linked to legal issues. In Cobán, where the Mayan languages and especially Q'eqchi', maintain a certain prestige, it has been less difficult to find teachers prepared for the program, but the difficulty has grown when looking for teachers of other languages.

Secondly, their education base in many cases, is not strong enough to support rigorous university studies. The Guatemalan educational system has many qualitative deficiencies which are accentuated in the interior of the country. The students in the program mainly come from state schools whose academic level is markedly lower.

Finally, the lack a standard Mayan language presents

another difficulty. Many Mayan languages are still in the initial phases of establishing written standards to serve as a means of communication accepted and used by the entire linguistic community. This difficulty added to the proliferation of dialects has seriously complicated the development of the required written materials for the translator's education.

The Future

The need to enlarge the program is obvious and the University is planning to open it soon in the Guatemala City campus for at least three more Mayan languages: Kaqchikel, Tz'utujil, and Poqomam, and also for Garifuna, a language spoken by the black caribs that inhabit the Atlantic coast of Guatemala. The number of students who receive scholarships will increase with funds from USAID in the framework of EDUMAYA, an ambitious University program that proposes to graduate approximately 500 indigenous professionals by 2001.

To extend the program to new languages also means to extend the production of materials. Such materials, primordially used for the preparation of the students, can also extend their scope and influence to the State courts and offices situated in those linguistic communities served, thus benefiting more indigenous communities of Guatemala. On the other hand, the University knows that in order to support the qualitative improvement of the judicial system for the indigenous world of Guatemala, it is not enough to prepare legal translators. This presents the challenge of linguistically preparing the judges and personnel of the community courts, preparing bilingual lawyers and notaries, and tackling cultural issues by training cultural experts. Also, we must continue to study indigenous customary laws. The challenge is to make the program and University serve the society from which it comes.

Guillermina Herrera Peña is a Guatemalan linguist. Since 1976, she has been studying Mayan languages, working in bilingual intercultural education for indigenous people, and in language planning. She is now a member of the Commission for Official Recognition of Indigenous Languages recently set up for implementation of the Peace Accords.

Nicole Thornton is the Education Coordinator at Cultural Survival and is a Guest Editor for this issue.

"The legal translator profession in our region is a very esteemed profession, given that professionals that graduate assume a very important role in a society where people are marginalized, exploited, and discriminated against due to their ignorance of their own rights. Our work as translators will be to defend our indigenous brothers and sisters that have suffered most."

-Alma Quib Cu, Q'eqchi' Maya student,
5th semester of study, La Verapaz

What Exactly Is It That You Teach?

Developing an Indigenous Education Program at the University Level

by Deirdre A. Almeida

“What exactly is it that you teach?” I have been responding to this question for the past four years of my appointment as a faculty member in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts. The tone of this question implies that what I teach is odd and marginal. The question primarily comes from my European American colleagues and is consistently accompanied by blank stares or doubting scowls. It has even been insinuated that indigenous education is something I have fabricated and is an invalid focus of study and research.

Why Indigenous Education?

As a Native American educator from the Lenni Lenape and Shawnee nations, I have had various professional responsibilities: Social Studies teacher at a tribal controlled alternative school, Director of Education for a Native American foster child care project, Educational Program Specialist for the United States Department of Education-Office of Indian Education, Native American Undergraduate Admissions Recruiter, and currently Assistant Professor of Education. Prior to the summer of 1987, my focus of study was limited to the indigenous peoples of North America, primarily the United States. In June 1987, I had the honor of attending the first World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The workshops, lectures, cultural presentations, and informal conversations with delegates from around the world contributed to my own formulation of the role education has played in the suppression of indigenous peoples.

Attending the first World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education was a meaningful professional experience; it was during this conference that I came to realize the need to be even more global in my research and teaching. Not only was it important to focus on the education of Native Americans in the United States, but I also had to be inclusive of indigenous nations from around the world. I realized our common educational needs were linked to our common cultural traditions and political struggles for self-determination. I came to understand that indigenous

education was the compelling and necessary area of study and research of the future.

Developing and Implementing a Specialization in Indigenous Education

In the spring of 1993, I was invited to join the faculty of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts; the research I had been asked to develop was Native American education. I set out to develop three major graduate courses for students wishing to specialize in indigenous education: an introductory/theory course, a

course examining the educational and social issues of indigenous communities, and a curriculum development and reform course. I felt that these three courses would provide students with a sound foundation in indigenous education. Through other courses within the School of Education and other University departments, students could enhance their individual focus of study. The courses were designed keeping in mind the academic and professional needs of both indigenous and non-indigenous educators. It

is important for students to move from being passive inactive learners, to proactive; not only are they educators, but also activists. The importance of critical thinking by both teachers and students is crucial.

Academia does not always encourage critical thinking as students are expected to sit quietly while teachers instill knowledge. Only questions which the teacher deems acceptable may be asked; opposing perspectives are not always appreciated or allowed by teachers. This style of education allows for only one point of view to be expressed and limits the student's knowledge and thinking. Critical thinking must be encouraged and allowed to take place within the classroom. In addition, issues have to fully be presented and discussed. This can only be accomplished if teachers are made to understand the importance of such teaching methods.

The introductory course, simply entitled 'Indigenous Education' establishes the fundamental holistic theory and begins to encourage critical thinking skills. This course focuses on how indigenous peoples must be allowed to

*"It is important
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activists."*

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educate themselves. Further, this course allows students to select specific indigenous peoples on which to center their research over the entire semester. Indigenous students often take this opportunity to conduct research relevant to their own communities. Others, particularly non-indigenous students, use the course to learn about an indigenous group of individual interest. Because the entire class does not research the same group of indigenous peoples, there is a variety of groups being researched and discussed.

The research topics may not seem to be relevant to education at first, but through weekly assignments and class discussions, the relationship between indigenous issues and educational reform is established. Topics range from examining the role of oral traditions in the education of indigenous students, education as a tool of colonization, and the exploitation and appropriation of indigenous intellectual property rights, to indigenous control and development of their own educational system and networking between indigenous and non-indigenous educators. The course assignments which have the most impact on the students and contribute to making their learning experience more effective, are the weekly critiques of the progress and problems they are experiencing in their research.

A short comparison critique related to the topic for the week is independently researched and written by each student pertaining to the indigenous group they have selected. This allows students to examine their own educational experience and teaching style. Two articles on the weekly topic are required to develop the critique, one from the indigenous and one from a non-indigenous point of view. The purpose behind this approach is for students to look at various sides of the issue. They begin to understand the importance of looking at something from as many angles as possible before determining their own position. Students also realize the difficulty in finding reliable resources; especially those representing the indigenous perspective and in particular, articles written by indigenous scholars. Ultimately, these assignments lead to discussions of who controls media and academic scholarship.

Students' Reaction to Indigenous Education

Over the past four years, indigenous and non-indigenous students have expressed that the study of indigenous education is very empowering for them as it

"...but through weekly assignments and class discussions, the relationship between indigenous issues and educational reform is established."

provides the opportunity to reflect on their own educational experiences, what they learned, and how they were taught about indigenous peoples. Many openly discuss how within their own country's school curriculums, the inclusion of their indigenous culture and history does not exist. For example, as a student from South Africa shared, "I have come to realize that in order to learn about my own history and cultural oppression I had to leave my homeland, where it [Zulu culture] was not valued and excluded from our schools." Native American students informed University administrators and faculty that offering courses and research in indigenous education influenced their decisions to attend and stay at the University of Massachusetts. It is extremely important for indigenous students to have academic programs which are relevant to their individual professional growth and responsive to their cultural priorities available to them. It must be recognized that for many indigenous students, the completion of their graduate studies is strongly linked to the survival of their own communities.

Closing

Indigenous education is a vital area of study and research within education. Indigenous educators must be provided course selections

and research training to specialize in educational reform and leadership during their graduate careers in order to understand the problems faced by indigenous people. Schools of Education must be supportive of indigenous colleagues if quality education is to become a reality for indigenous populations. The study of indigenous education must not only be limited to indigenous educators; it is necessary that it be incorporated into the academic conscience of non-indigenous educators as well. Only then will education become a powerful and effective means for equality in contemporary society.

"...for many indigenous students, the completion of their graduate studies is strongly linked to the survival of their own communities."

Deirdre A. Almeida is Lenni Lenape and Shawnee. Currently a member of the School of Education faculty at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, she offers graduate level courses in curriculum and learning with a specialization in Native American education and curriculum reform.

Historical and Contemporary Policies of Indigenous Education in Mexico

by Salomón Nahmad, translated by Nicole Thornton

In the national education plan of modern nations like Mexico, the construction of a national identity for the entire population has been confused as contrary to the preservation of ethnic and cultural diversity of indigenous peoples. In a long historical process of more than 5,000 years formal and informal systems of education have developed.

Pre-colonial Mesoamerica was distinguished by a complex system of education and human resource training through 'endoculturation' from the family, village, community, and ethnic regions. At the start of the European invasion in the central valleys of Mexico, the Spanish found that the Aztecs had developed an educational organization directed through two schools, one for the *macehuales* or common folk and one for the *pipiltzin* or aristocrats who were trained to be priests, architects, painters, doctors, poets, singers, soldiers, etc. Pre-Columbian education engendered loyalty and ethics towards the self-preservation of the community.

During the colonial era, a system of forced education was introduced in order to convert the Indian population to Catholicism and to unify the Spanish language in New Spain. The national education and language policies contradicted the respect and maintenance of indigenous peoples education systems. (Indigenous people maintained the informal systems of education under the family and community's care even though the formal systems of education were eliminated).

After independence, education was fundamentally focused towards European life and although Indians constituted the majority of the population, the racist and discriminatory elements of the governing elites ignored the multilingual and multicultural populations of Mexico. The knowledge held by indigenous peoples was stigmatized and considered primitive. Since independence, laws did not modify conditions of education for indigenous peoples; teaching was directed towards achieving fluency of the Spanish language and disavowing the multiple local indigenous languages.

Revolutionary Era

The armed indigenous movements of the past century represent resistance to the economic, political, and cultural subjugation that greatly limited their participation in the education systems. The education congresses, teachers' schools, and pedagogical models never included the indigenous population and the special systems that they require.

The central philosophy of the positivists was oriented to eliminate indigenous cultures. Rafael Ramírez, founder of the Rural Mexican School, implored rural teachers to contribute to linguistic and cultural ethnocide.

The education system between 1923 to 1950 operated under the thesis of incorporation and assimilation that denies the development of indigenous cultures. In 1936, the Independent Department of Indian Affairs was created whose philosophy expounded the necessity of 'Mexicanizing' the Indian and not 'Indianizing' Mexico. In order to support this position, the National School of Anthropology and the School of Rural Medicine were created to incorporate indigenous peoples into mainstream Mexico.

In 1939, the First Assembly of Philologists and Linguists convened and recommended the immediate use of indigenous teachers and native languages when teaching indigenous adults and in the initial schooling of indigenous children. Two pilot projects were instigated; one in the Purepecha region of Michoacán and the other in the Rarámuri (Tarahumara) region where the Literacy Institute for Monolingual Indians was born.

This new trend opposed the incorporationist and assimilationist thesis. Upon holding the First Interamerican Indigenous Congress, participants from American countries concluded that the Indians' educational process should take into account the language, culture, and personality of the students. This new trend resurfaced in 1948 through the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. They demonstrated the importance of an education system which should include teachers from the communities, teaching in both Spanish and the indigenous language, as well as respecting the cultures of indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, the basic education of indigenous children that had been extended by the rural monolingual schools, resisted this new policy and still maintains control of thousands of schools in indigenous regions where assimilationist theses persist.

The two currents of Indian education methods and techniques contradict each other. In some Mexican states like Chiapas and Oaxaca, special programs for indigenous people were designed to educate children in Spanish. In 1978, the General Directorate of Indigenous Education was created as part of the National Formal System of Basic Education. Although the Mexican Constitution does not mention indigenous education, the 1993 General Law of Education states

FOCUS

Reclaiming Native Education

that education's aim is to promote, through Spanish language instruction, a common language for all Mexicans without reducing the development of indigenous languages. These educational requirements should also adapt to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of each indigenous group in Mexico.

Before the reality of national multilingualism and the diverse demands of indigenous peoples like those of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, congresses and assemblies of bilingual teachers, indigenous organizations, and communities demanded recognition of their right to practice their languages and cultures, and to have control over their governmental and social institutions within a context of autonomy. The two programs that have been directed to satisfy these demands include the training of ethnolinguists and linguists to learn and analyze the languages in their diverse contexts, and the training of higher level, indigenous, bilingual educators. For this purpose, el Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores de Antropología Social and la Universidad Pedagógica have implemented programs in these fields.

Mexico's linguistic policy has experienced certain changes in recent years, particularly the change to the Constitution in Article 4 that recognizes "the Mexican nation has a pluri-cultural composition sustained originally in its indigenous peoples. The law will protect and promote the development of their languages, cultures, practices and customs, resources, and specific forms of social organization, it will guarantee to their members effective access to the jurisdiction of the State."

Unfortunately, antagonistic and contradictory systems and methodologies operate and coexist. Even if they do not define themselves explicitly, the theses of education in Spanish are implicit in the programs that solely use Spanish as a method in bilingual and monolingual indigenous communities. The alternative of bilingual and intercultural education for indigenous peoples has not reached all the indigenous regions of Mexico. The 'ethnocidal' tendency persists with regard to the original languages and cultures of Mexico. The use of multiple indigenous languages tends to limit itself to being used as a tool to facilitate the *castellanización* or 'Hispanicization' of indigenous peoples and are not taught for their intrinsic value. Indigenous languages are rarely used after the third grade of primary school and are infrequently promoted as a means of communication or in literature, film, and theater.

The constitutional changes at the national level have been very minimal in their impact on bilingual and intercultural education for the indigenous peoples. The state of Oaxaca, on the other hand, has produced reforms that can mobilize indigenous energy in order to construct a model in indigenous education. Article 7 of Oaxaca's 1996 State Law of Education states explicitly that it is the obligation of the state to provide bilingual and intercultural education to all indigenous peoples corresponding to their cultures. Bilingual

teachers actively participated in changing the state law of education and because of their efforts the law is crossed with edicts and ordinances that protect and stimulate the development of an education for the indigenous peoples.

The execution of Oaxaca's law is recent, but surely it can be an example for other states in Mexico. There are some examples of indigenous designed models for education, notably in the case of the Totontepec Mixes. The Indians' demands in Chiapas are also oriented to place greater emphasis on an education that includes characteristics typical of the Maya civilization.

Some Conclusions

The profound contradictions between both the Mesoamerican and European civilizations are reflected in the relationship between indigenous peoples and Mexico's educational policies in the past 175 years. Although a favorable legal framework for indigenous peoples has started to develop in the last decade and indigenous social actors have articulated innovative proposals for their education, the national and state education systems in their diverse modalities, do not respond to the complexity and diversity of the socio-cultural and linguistic phenomenon.

Across Mexico, there exists a combination of educational approaches that reinforce linguistic ethnocide, assimilation, reincorporation, integration and manifest in schools that are inefficient and of low educational quality. For that very reason, strong tensions exist between these diverse systems and educational services provided to indigenous children. Such tensions generate inter-ethnic, political, and economic conflicts.

In general, Mexican society exalts the pre-colonial indigenous past and excludes indigenous peoples from the present. Nevertheless, indigenous armed uprisings, and attitudes of guardianship and paternalism towards the indigenous peoples are still the norm at the end of the 20th century. Indigenous peoples today demand greater autonomy in the execution and evaluation of their education that can strengthen the Mesoamerican heritage of cultural and linguistic diversity—a heritage that more than 10 million indigenous inhabitants of today's Mexico still maintain in a country that numerically has the largest population of the American continent.

Salomón Nahmad is a social anthropologist, researcher with the Center for Research and Advanced Study in Social Anthropology of Oaxaca and an Educational Consultant at the World Bank.

Nicole Thornton is the Education Coordinator at Cultural Survival and is the Guest Editor for this issue.

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Curriculum Resources on Multicultural and Global Education, Environment and Diversity

TEACHING RESOURCES

Global Education Office of the World Affairs Council assists educators in preparing young people to understand and appreciate cultural diversity and global interdependence in both their local and global communities. Their resources include the Curriculum Resource Center, Global Classroom Program, Professional Development Seminars and United Nations Field Trips.
Contact: 22 Battery March St., Boston, MA 02109

Primary Source is a non-profit center for multicultural and global studies promoting education in the humanities that is historically accurate, culturally inclusive, and explicitly concerned with racism and other forms of discrimination. Primary Source advocates teaching history from multiple perspectives using original source materials, oral history, and cooperative learning techniques.

Contact: P.O. Box 381711, Cambridge, MA 02238
Located at: 680 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02172
Tel: 617-923-9933 fax: 617-923-0975
e-mail: info@primarysource.org
http://www.primarysource.org

The Massachusetts Studies Project was formed to promote studies of the state and the use of its educational resources throughout the curriculum: history, government, people (cultures, arts), geography, and environment. The materials are available on-line at
http://K12s.phast.umass.edu/~masag/indexma.html

Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA) works with school communities to develop and promote teaching methods and resources for social and economic justice in the Americas.
Contact: P.O. Box 73038, Washington, DC 20056-3038
Tel: 202 806-7277 fax: 202 806-7663
e-mail: necadc@aol.com

Cooperative Artists Institute produced "Tribal Rhythms" Creating the Village," a Curriculum Guide for Building Community with Children and uses arts-based techniques and activities as a base for a multicultural curriculum.
Contact: 311 Forest Hills Street, Boston, MA 02130-3605
Tel: 617-524-6378 fax: 617-522-7122
e-mail: CAI@tribal-rhythms.org

The American Forum for Global Education is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to promote education for responsible citizenship in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world. The Publications Catalog includes resources on global issues as well as regional studies.
Contact: 120 Wall Street, Suite 2600, New York, NY 10005
Tel: 212-742-8232 fax: 212-742-8752
e-mail: globed@igc.org
http://www.globaled.org

Educators for Social Responsibility supports educators with professional development, networks, and instructional materials. ESR offers curricula and instructional materials and workshops, consultation, and training for educators, parents, and communities. Curricula include Conflict Resolution, Peacemaking, Making History, Roots and Wings and much more.
Contact: ESR, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
Tel: 617 492-1764
http://www.benjerry.com/esr

Educational Resources from the United Nations provides a range of educational resources for all school levels, including videos, charts and books. The Global Teach-In packages are specially prepared for three different levels: primary, intermediate and secondary schools.

Contact: United Nations Publications, Sales and Marketing Section, Room DC2-853, Dept. D017, New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212-963-8302, 800-253-9646
fax: 212-963-3489
e-mail: globalteach_in@un.org
http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus

Facing History and Ourselves is a national educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. Facing History provides a Guide to Audio-Visual Resources which are free to rent.

Contact: Facing History and Ourselves
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Tel: 617-232-1595 fax: 617 232-0281
http://www.facing.org
e-mail: info_boston@facing.org

Four Worlds Development Project is a holistic education and development project serving North American native communities and works to eliminate alcohol and drug abuse by the year 2000. The Resource Catalogue includes books, curriculum packages, occasional papers, videos and magazines for research and community programming.
Contact: Four Directions International
1224 Lakemount Blvd., Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3K1 Canada
Tel: 403-320-7144 fax: 403-329-8383

Intercultural Center for Research in Education is dedicated to projects that promote quality and equity of education for socially disadvantaged and language minority groups in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Contact: INCRE
366 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02174
Tel: 617-643-2142 fax: 617-643-1315
e-mail: icre@igc.apc.org

PEN America Center works to advance literature and reading in the United States and to defend free expression everywhere.

Contact: PEN America Center
568 Broadway, Room 401, New York, NY 10012-3225
Tel: 212-334-1600 fax: 212-334-2181
e-mail: pen@echonyc.com
www.pen.org

Smithsonian Publications for Teachers publishes resource guides and curriculum materials for a range of grade levels.
Contact: Smithsonian Institution/Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)
A & I 1163/MRC 402, Washington DC 20560
fax: 202-357-2116 http://educate.si.edu

Tibet Education Network endeavors to raise awareness of Tibetan civilization, Tibetan Buddhism, and the current Tibetan situation. Services and programs include designing and facilitating and variety of interactive, experiential programs for K-12. Curricular and resource materials are also offered.
Contact: Tibet Education Network
P.O. Box 30094, Seattle, WA 98103
phone/fax: 206 781-2342

AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES

Documentary Educational Resources
101 Morse St., Watertown, MA 02172
Tel: 617-926-0491 http://der.org/docued

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Contact: Church World Service
The Film Library Catalogue
P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515
Tel: 219-264-3102 fax: 219-262-0966
internet: cws_film_library.parti@ecunet.org

PUBLICATIONS WITH ARTICLES AND CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Human Rights Education: The Fourth R
Amnesty International USA
Human Rights Educators' Network
53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 1162
Chicago, IL 60604-3606

Teaching Tolerance
Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104
Order Dept. fax: 334 264-7310
www.splcenter.org

WorldViews: A Quarterly Review of Resources for Education and Action
WorldViews Resource Center
464 19th St., Oakland, CA 94612-2297
Tel: 510-451-1742 fax: 510-835-3017
e-mail: worldviews@igc.org
http://www.igc.org/worldviews

A Traveler to the Other World

In Memory of Anselmo Pérez

by Francisco Alvarez Q., Robert M. Laughlin, Diego Mendez Guzmán

Anselmo Pérez (baptized Mariano Audelino), Tzotzil Maya, was born in the hamlet of Pat Osil, Zinacantan, Chiapas, Mexico. Together with Domingo de la Torre, they collaborated with Robert M. Laughlin in the compilation of *The Great Tzotzil Dictionary of San Lorenzo Zinacantan*, containing 30,000 entries. He and Domingo, traveling as lexicographers to the United States in 1963 and 1967, were the first Mayans to record, with extraordinary detail in their own language, the bizarre, ridiculous, and fearful elements of our modern world. Their narratives were published in *Xanbal ta nom: Visies al Otro Mundo* in 1989 and in *Of Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax* in 1980. Anselmo also recorded for *Of Wonders Wild and New* a number of his dreams, showing that his own traditional culture was no less fearful. During 1977-1978 he and his Chamula colleague, Mariano Lopez Mendez, worked in San Cristóbal, writing five volumes of folktales, descriptions of customs, and oral history.

Following this, Anselmo, Mariano, and Domingo's son Juan, were aided by the poet, Jaime Sabines and his brother Juan Sabines, governor of Chiapas, in forming the Sociedad Cultural Maya de Chiapas that published two bilingual booklets. When their funds were exhausted, Anselmo plead their cause at a conference, Forty Years of Anthropological Research in Chiapas. In 1982, with funding from Cultural Survival, Sna Jtz'ibajom (The House of the Writer), Cultura de los Indios Mayas, A.C. was born.

As a founding member of Sna Jtz'ibajom, Anselmo wrote many of the association's booklets on customs and folklore. As an actor, he took the role of his patron saint San Lorenzo, disguised under the name of Lencho, in the association's play and video, *¿A poco hay cimarrones?* As a puppeteer, he made two more trips to the U.S. and was

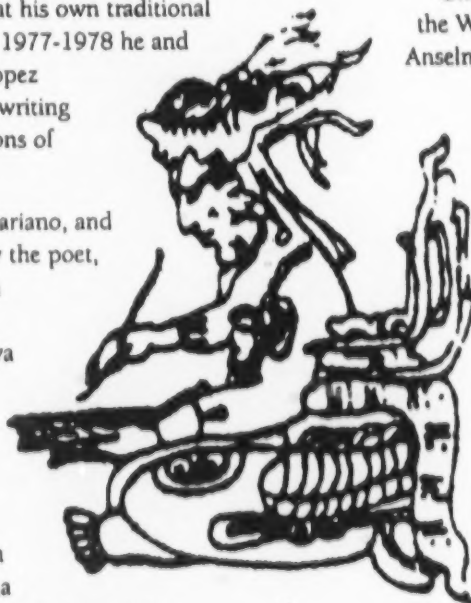
also invited to the Science Museum of Man in St. Paul, Minnesota to bless a Zinacantec house. He was a co-founder and president of the Centro Cultural de Zinacantan, A.C., whose Museo Ikal Ojov displayed with great artistry the traditional life of the community. In addition to documenting Mayan culture, Anselmo was active in the spiritual life of Zinacantan, first as a sacristan and then as an official of the religious hierarchy. At the age of 12 he became a shaman, eventually reaching the highest position. During the Persian Gulf War and at the Zapatista uprising, he, with the other chief shamans, prayed for peace in the churches and mountain shrines of Zinacantan.

One of the pioneer members of The House of the Writer, Diego Mendez Guzmán, recalls Anselmo's counsel:

"When the imagination puts your feet on the ground, you have to prepare the soil first. With great care your hands deposit the seeds. When the plants germinate, grow, flower, and die back, they provide more seeds to plant for the whole Mayan nation. For many centuries our history was unknown. Not one of us could write the name of the seeds. Only anthropologists existed who cultivated the seeds, studying, writing, and spreading abroad our culture, the daily life of our people."

But with the creation of Sna Jtz'ibajom, and under Anselmo's wise and courtly guidance, many Tzotzil and Tzeltal writers and actors will be remembered for planting their own seeds for the Mayan people of Chiapas.

Anselmo Pérez Pérez, aged 57, died on Guadalupe Day, December 12, 1997. His neighbors believe an evil spirit released Anselmo's nagual from its corral in the other world. Why else would he die so young?



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The December massacre of 45 unarmed indigenous civilians in the town of Acteal in Chiapas, Mexico has been devastating both in terms of lives and livelihoods. In the wake of the violence, crops have been stolen, farmers are afraid to work in their fields for fear of further attacks, and families trying to recover are left with no income.



As a worker-owned fair trade organization, Equal Exchange is dedicated to fair trade with small coffee farmers. In Chiapas, we trade with La Unión Majomut, a cooperative of 1,200 members in 17 Tzotzil and Tzeltal indigenous communities in Chenalhó. Because of the violence, and the Mexican army's occupation of their processing plant in Polhó, the farmers will have no coffee to sell this year, leaving them with little to live on.

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Massacre of Tzotzil Indians in Chiapas in the Wake of Low Intensity War

by Lynn Stephen

International attention returned to the ongoing low-intensity war in Chiapas, Mexico, when 45 Tzotzil indigenous people (primarily women and children) were gunned down in a five-hour killing spree. The attack began by storming the village church in Acteal where people were kneeling in prayer. The Acteal massacre has been established in Mexico as the single worst act of political violence this century since the 1968 massacre of hundreds of student protesters in Mexico City.

Reasons behind the Acteal massacre are far too complex to completely unravel here, but events in the past four years are of central importance to understanding the tensions, divisions, and ongoing violence throughout Chiapas. After the Zapatista rebellion of 1994, many communities in Chiapas became increasingly divided between those people supporting the ruling party in the Mexico, the PRI (Party of the Institutional Revolution), and those either aligned with, or supportive of the demands of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), that focused on indigenous autonomy.

When the Zapatista supported candidate for the governor of Chiapas lost in the 1995 elections, communities sympathetic to the Zapatista agenda in Chiapas declared autonomy and organized parallel forms of government throughout the state. As more regions of the state declared autonomy, communities became divided between those loyal to the PRI and those loyal to the autonomous local governments. In practice, many communities have two sets of governing officials.

As the Zapatista agenda gained support after 1994, the Mexican and Chiapas governments used a variety of strategies to control the Zapatista civilian movement. They established a large network of military bases and encampments in and around indigenous communities. The army has taken over the state police forces and is augmented by thousands of state 'public security' police.

While international pressure, civil resistance, and the unrelenting work of human rights organizations prevented the army from carrying out direct attacks on Zapatista sympathizers, the promotion of local paramilitary groups emerged as a more successful strategy. In January, 1998, *Proceso* magazine published a report on the Mexican Defense Ministry's 1994 plans to crush the Zapatistas by arming local paramilitary groups. Military intelligence was put in charge of "secretly organizing certain segments of the population." At least seven paramilitary groups are currently operating in Chiapas. It was such a paramilitary group, armed, and trained by state police (and probably ex-military personnel as well) who carried out the Acteal massacre. One of the well-known paramilitary groups in northern Chiapas, Paz y Justicia (Peace and Justice), received \$575,000 dollars to carry out an 'agricultural program' in 1998.

Following the Acteal massacre, protests in Mexico and throughout the world resulted in the replacement of the Interior Minister and the resignation of the PRI-governor of Chiapas, Cesar

Ruiz Ferro. A state police commander and dozens of local indigenous men were arrested for participating in the massacre. A report from the Mexican government's National Human Rights Commission includes testimony from an eye witness who describes how officials and police in Chiapas either helped plan the massacre or turned a blind eye. State police were informed several times of shooting in the vicinity of the massacre while it was going on, but reported finding no disturbances.

In early January, a local police unit open-fired on a crowd of Tzeltal protesters gathered to demand peace in Ocosingo and killed one woman and injured her small daughter. In late January, two indigenous peasant leaders were murdered within 72 hours of one another and three bodies of presumed Zapatista sympathizers were found hanging in the municipality of Ocosingo.

The ongoing violence and local divisions have also resulted in the more than 6,000 displaced men, women, and children. Paramilitary groups acting before the December massacre drove people out of their homes, burned their houses and possessions, and made it impossible for them to return to their communities and fields. Since the massacre, more people have fled. A communiqué from the representatives of displaced communities and the autonomous municipal authority of San Pedro Chenalhó, written on January 20, 1998 addressed to the International Committee of the Red Cross gives a stark overview of their current situation.

"Thousands of people are living under small plastic roofs that do not provide protection from the rain and cold, and many others live out in the open, for which reason we need construction materials such as tin roofing, wood and nails. We are suffering from a severe shortage of food and survive only on a few tortillas and some food that civil society has brought us, but which is not enough for so many people. The products that we most need are: corn, beans, salt, sugar, soap, and other basic items, since all of our things, corn, beans, coffee and all of our animals were stolen by the paramilitary groups and government security forces. Since we were displaced and made refugees outside of our communities, 15 children, 8 women and 10 men have died from illnesses including: diarrhea, fever, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, parasites, ulcers, skin infections, malnutrition, etc.. These are the diseases that are attacking and killing the thousands of refugees; right now we have over 200 sick persons, both children and adults, in need of immediate medical attention, yet there is a shortage of doctors and of medicines. They also need clothing and blankets to protect them from the cold, especially for the children and women."

Organizations listed on the next page are collecting funds and supplies for refugees in Chiapas.

Lynn Stephen is a Professor of Anthropology at Northeastern University.



Members of a Tzotzil women's weaving cooperative in Chenalhó, Chiapas.

Those interested in providing aid can make donations to the following organizations:

Enlace Civil

Calle Ignacio Allende 4, 29200 San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico
Tel/fax: 011-52-967-82104
e-mail: enlacecivil@laneta.apc.org website: <http://www.laneta.apc.org/enlacecivil>

Sister Lourdes Toussaint

Caritas de San Cristóbal de las Casas, A.C., Apartado Postal 311
29200 San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico
tel/fax: 311-52-967-86479

In Boston, Tonantzin (Boston Committee in Support of the Native Peoples of Mexico) is raising money to buy food, medicine, blankets,

and other supplies Grassroots International is collaborating in this effort. To make a tax-deductible contribution make checks out to Grassroots International and send to:

Tonantzin

c/o CISPES
42 Seaverns Ave., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Equal Exchange, the fair trade coffee company, is raising funds to rebuild their trading partner, La Unión Majomut, in Chenalhó, Chiapas. La Unión Majomut's processing plant is occupied by the army and farmers are afraid to work their fields. For more information, contact:

Rodney North

Equal Exchange
251 Revere St., Canton, MA 02021
e-mail: eqex@igc.apc.org website: <http://www.equalexchange.com>

Nationally, Pastors for Peace is organizing an aid caravan to Chiapas for delivery at the end of April. For more information contact:

Pastors for Peace

Midwest Office (Chicago): 773-2714817 fax 773-271-5269
e-mail: p4p@igc.apc.org
National Office (New York): 212-926-5757
fax: 212-926-5842
e-mail: ifco@igc.apc.org
website: <http://www.ifconews.org>

In addition you can write to the President of Mexico.

Sr. Ernesto Zedillo

Presidente
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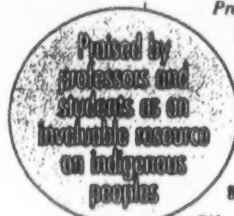
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